



Irvington Insight

The Official Newsletter for Irvington UFSD

www.IrvingtonSchools.org

Capital Bond

Project

“We have developed creative, cost-effective designs to provide safe, up-to-date learning environments for our students and staff.”

*Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Kristopher Harrison*

The vote is scheduled for
May 21
from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
at Main Street School.

Irvington Union Free School District administrators and Board of Education members have introduced a state-aided, debt-neutral capital bond project to address the District's facilities' needs in four key areas - safety and security, infrastructure repairs and enhancements, energy conservation and modernization of learning spaces. The Board of Education unanimously adopted a resolution at its March 19 meeting to present the \$18,867,640 million bond proposal to the greater community for a vote on May 21.

The proposed capital project is the result of the extensive research and planning by the District's Board of Education and its Buildings and Grounds Committee, along with the administration and the community-based Capital Project Planning Committee. Chaired by Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations Carol Stein and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kristopher Harrison, the Capital Project Planning Committee identified an inventory and priority of needs that were then evaluated by the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The vast majority of these items have been integrated into the proposed project.

Continued on Page 4

Dear Community Members,

This school year the District has enjoyed great success as seen through the lens of student growth and accomplishments and the work of our outstanding professional staff. Throughout this school year, the District has been proud to regularly feature our students' accomplishments and growth at monthly Board of Education meetings, on our website (www.IrvingtonSchools.org), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/IrvingtonUFSD/) and in our weekly District newsletter - *This Week in the Irvington Schools*. In Irvington, our students continue to thrive in their academic pursuits, athletic competitions and through their artistic, musical and dramatic displays of talent. Our students' success is an outgrowth of the dedication and commitment of our talented faculty, staff and administrators and, just as important, through the critical partnership that is evident with the Board of Education and Irvington school community.

Each year, the District crafts a budget that is designed to advance the learning of our students and to support their growth as learners and individuals. The 2018-19 budget plan has achieved its goals on numerous levels by investing in the development of student programs, supporting our faculty and staff through professional learning and maintaining our facilities. Notably, this year the District has expanded its well-known STEM program, Project Lead the Way, to grades K-2 that now offer a comprehensive K-12 sequence of learning for our students. By doing so, our students will be equipped with essential opportunities that will prepare them for life beyond our schools in college and in their careers. Experiences such as this are critical to helping construct a world-class education that sets IUFSD apart from other Districts in the region.

At the same time, we hold the responsibility to support the growth of the whole child. To this end, the District introduced a K-5 guidance counselor to build upon our strong 6-12 guidance department and to complement existing curricular and programmatic experiences in which our students participate in to support their social and emotional development. These are just a couple of the many enhancements that enrich the Irvington school experience. As we look to the 2019-20 school year and the related budget process, the Irvington team of educators, along with the support of the Board of Education, will continue to identify opportunities that will always provide the very best experiences for every student.

Each and every staff member is committed to attaining the District's mission and vision through the implementation of our strategic plan, *Our Vision for Tomorrow*. Details of the plan can be found on the District website and are featured in BOE presentations and in the weekly newsletter. A critical component of any strategic plan extends beyond that which a district achieves in the near term. To this end, the District is actively engaged in developing a capital project that will support our mission by providing high-quality learning spaces that support current and future needs. The proposed capital project does this through a focus on four key areas: safety and security, facility infrastructure, energy efficiency and modernization of learning spaces. All school community members are encouraged to learn more about the project by reviewing the many resources and presentations that are posted on the District website.

In Irvington, we recognize that our students' success is possible due to the strong partnership that we share with the school community and through the feedback that is provided. As always, we welcome your attendance and participation at the many exciting school-based programs that occur weekly and at our regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings.

On behalf of every student and staff member, thank you for your support and trust.

Every student, every day,
Dr. Kristopher Harrison
Superintendent of Schools



A Message from your Superintendent of Schools

Kristopher Harrison, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As we go to print with the 2019 newsletter, I am so pleased to share a range of stories that speak to the strength of our Irvington school community:

- On a Friday night in early March, PTSA volunteers and school district families revived a celebration of global togetherness with International Culture Night, featuring food and performances from cultures around the world. Additionally, recently introduced French and Spanish clubs at Dows Lane have proven to be popular with students.
- That same evening, the talented Irvington girls varsity basketball team led by the ever kind and humble coach Gina Maher battled its way to the Section 1 championship. Nearly 2,000 fans packed the Pace University arena as a student-coordinated “Rivertowns Unite” rallying effort brought together our area community to enthusiastically support the Irvington girls and Dobbs Ferry boys basketball teams.
- A few weeks earlier, for World Read Aloud Day, Dows Lane and Main Street Schools invited special guests, including State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and network TV host and Irvington resident Meredith Vieira, to read a book to each elementary class.
- In late fall, 15 Irvington High School students were selected for Area All-State music ensembles by the Westchester County School Music Association for its 2018 Area All-State Festival Concert, which was held on November 8 at SUNY Purchase College.
- The middle and high schools also celebrated the effort and success of students in the recent Science Olympiad and Science Research Seminar program in regional competitions.

At midyear, these are only a sampling of the wonderful student experiences taking place in the Irvington schools.

At the same time, our schools are considering new opportunities to improve the student learning experience, including:

1. Piloting Amplify, a new curriculum intended to meet Next Generation Science Learning Standards.
2. Developing a new high school master schedule to better serve the academic and wellness needs of students.
3. Planning a debt-neutral capital bond project to improve security, maintain our facilities, and modernize school learning spaces.

All of these initiatives are supported by the professional experience and dedication of faculty, staff, and administrators and the engagement and feedback of students, school families, and our school community, which elicits important feedback.

The Board of Education is serious about its oversight role. Following a review by the BOE’s legal counsel of certain discrepancies related to the records of a district employee, we have implemented an independent review of the District’s Human Resources practices and processes by an objective, third-party professional.

The Board of Education encourages you to follow all these events and initiatives via our weekly District emails, monthly Board of Education briefs and the District website, www.irvingtonschools.org. If you aren’t receiving emailed communications from the District or the Board and you would like to, don’t hesitate to sign up by contacting donna.friedlander@irvingtonschools.org to be added to the lists. You are also welcome to attend BOE meetings or watch meetings online via BoardDocs on the District website.

Planning for the 2019-20 annual budget takes place during the months of February to April. We are watching to see what impact federal tax changes and annual state education funding decisions may have on our region and district. However, the BOE and District administration have focused on strategic objectives; long-range planning; contract reforms; finding savings such as from the refinancing of serial bonds; planning a well-timed, debt-neutral capital bond; and supporting tax-cap compliant budgets to maintain fiscal responsibility while striving to continuously improve the educational experience for students. There are no shortcuts that permit large budget cuts without negatively affecting student learning, but we are working to identify efficiencies and develop responsible budgets.

Together, as a school community, let’s move our Irvington Union Free School District forward with devotion, careful planning, and resolve.



A Message from your Board of Education President

Michael Hanna

Capital Bond Project

Continued from Page 1



All of this planning has been supported by the ongoing professional opinion of industry experts, such as the architectural firm H2M, professional construction manager Triton Capital, security consultant Altaris and technology partner Edu Tek Ltd.

“Through this partnership, we have developed creative, cost-effective designs to provide safe, up-to-date learning environments for our students and staff,” Dr. Harrison said.

The referendum, if approved, would address safety and security improvements districtwide, including a more secure middle and high school campus featuring a dedicated point of entry at Irvington High School; security vestibules at Dows Lane Elementary School, Irvington Middle School and Main Street School; and enhanced exterior lighting and signage. It would also include the installation of additional

security cameras and a card-access door entry system for the exterior and classroom doors with a lock-down ability.

Infrastructure enhancements, which have a direct impact on District programs, include site work and paving throughout the District, partial roof replacement at Dows Lane, floor abatement at Main Street School and Dows Lane, and renovation of the girls bathroom at Irvington High School. The project would also include the replacement of the waste line at Main Street School, and construction of a storage building for athletic equipment with concession space and public bathrooms on the middle and high school campus.

The energy conservation work would include replacing the boiler at Dows Lane, replacing classroom univents and upgrading controls for the univents at Irvington High School, installing window solar and

safety film districtwide, replacing lights with LEDs for further savings, as well as the installation of air conditioning in all gyms.

The projects around the modernization of learning spaces will directly support and enhance the learning environment. They include reconfiguring library spaces at Dows Lane and at the middle and high school campus, addressing the needs in the campus theater, updating science, STEM classrooms and computer labs at various schools, adding collaborative spaces in the high school, as well as adding and replacing casework in the art and music classrooms in the middle and high school campus.

To avoid the cost of running a separate bond vote, District voters will be asked to vote on May 21, the same date as the annual school budget vote and Board of Education trustee elections.

“The timing of the initiatives also minimizes the impact to taxpayers because debt payments from any new borrowing replace a similar amount of retiring debt service, thus the term ‘debt-neutral,’” Stein said. “Moving forward on capital projects now is seen as beneficial because interest rates are still at historic lows. Additionally, unlike the District’s annual capital spending, New York State will contribute approximately 20 percent of the cost of bond projects within state-defined parameters.”

Residents are encouraged to learn about the project, attend upcoming meetings and share their feedback related to the future of the District’s school facilities.

For more information, visit the Capital Project Planning page on the district’s website at www.irvingtonschools.org.

Going Green: Schools Reduce Waste With Expanded Program



The Irvington Union Free School District is deeply committed to caring for the environment and instilling a sense of responsibility in its students, thanks to an expanded districtwide recycling and waste reduction program.

At Dows Lane Elementary School, students and staff have already significantly reduced the school's waste production – going from 104 pounds of trash every day to only 39 pounds of trash per day and from eight to four bags of trash every day. In addition, thanks to the program, the school projects its annual waste production to be reduced to 7,000 pounds of trash, compared to 19,000 pounds annually in previous years.

“The recycling initiative at Dows Lane has been successful, thanks to all students, staff and parent volunteers who are leading the charge to reducing our waste,” Principal Deborah Mariniello said.

The program, which was first

launched at Main Street School as a pilot, was expanded to all schools at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. Principal Joyce Chapnick attributed the program's success to the collaborative efforts of parent volunteers, students, teachers, custodial staff, lunch aids and staff, and volunteers from Irvington's Green Policy Task Force.

“Our students see firsthand that each one can make a difference by doing his or her part,” Chapnick said. “Our efforts to further recycle will reduce our carbon footprint, and an individual's effort does have an impact.”

Similar to Main Street School, the expanded waste reduction program at Dows Lane Elementary School features three recycling bins – one for paper recycling, one for commingled recycling and another one for trash – in each classroom, hallway and office. Meanwhile, there are four bins in the cafeteria: liquid, commingled, trash and compost. At the middle and high

school campus, the program is similar, but without the compost component in the cafeteria.

To further support the program, parent volunteers at Dows Lane Elementary School – also known as Recycling P.A.L.S. (Parents as Learning Support) – have assisted students in properly sorting items at the two recycling stations in the cafeteria during K-3 lunches. Fourth- and fifth-graders at Main Street School were educated about waste reduction through assemblies and lunchtime presentations.

At the middle and high schools, students and faculty were also educated about the program and encouraged to get further involved in the efforts throughout the year. Student leaders and members of the Environmental Clubs at both schools have partnered to conduct a waste audit on campus and consider the next steps in the process of advancing the recycling program and culture.

Guidance Program Expands Districtwide

The Irvington Union Free School District has taken proactive steps in ensuring its students' success by hiring Alissa Kane, a K-5 certified school counselor, who has been working with students at Dows Lane Elementary School and Main Street School.

“Students' needs have changed and in order to meet them where they are, we need to address their social-emotional needs,” Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Human Resources Dr. Raina Kor said. “Children need tools to self-regulate, cope and manage the social world around them and their own emotion-

al well-being so they can be present for learning. Our counselor is working to build their toolbox of strategies and habits they need to be successful academically and social-emotionally.”

An amendment to state education law requires all school districts across New York State to implement a comprehensive guidance program for all K-12 students beginning with the 2019-20 school year. Irvington administrators said they've already seen positive results.

At Dows Lane, Kane has been supporting students in identifying what they're feeling, as well as how to self-regulate, interact with peers, adjust to disappointments and make positive choices. She has also been teaching them to build empathy through listening and to show respect and kind-

ness throughout their school.

At Main Street School, Kane has been teaching students strategies to solve problems, aligned to the work of classroom teachers around the Habits of Mind. Additionally, she is supporting students in managing school responsibilities, advocating for oneself and developing friendships, as well as acceptance of others and understanding differences.

“The school counselor is a vital member of the social-emotional learning team,” Principal Joyce Chapnick said. “Ms. Kane helps all students in the areas of social and emotional development to support academic achievement. We want our students to be productive, well-adjusted citizens within and beyond our community.”

District Expands STEM to K-2

As part of a long-term plan to provide meaningful STEM-based learning experiences for all students, the District has expanded its Project Lead The Way offerings to students in grades K-2 this year.

In their classes, the District's youngest learners have been exploring how to sequence directions and design algorithms to accomplish tasks. Kindergartners are programming a digital animation about an animal in its habitat. In first grade, the students are working in pairs to design and program a digital, animated story that interacts with the reader. Meanwhile, second-graders are creating a video game using multiple pages, characters, repeat loops and more, and have constraints that must be followed.

"They're collaborating with their peers and utilizing the engineering design process to follow steps while creating their solutions," K-2 Project Lead The Way teacher Alyssa Fisher said. "Collaboration is a huge part of our class. It's amazing to see how quickly they learn."

Project Lead The Way - the nation's leading provider of rigorous and innovative science, technology, engineering and mathematics curricula - allows students to apply their critical thinking skills and acquired math and science knowledge to real-life, hands-on engineering and technology projects.

As a result of Project Lead The Way, the District has created a K-12 computer science strand that offers the youngest learners the opportunity to engage in design thinking through compelling activities, projects and problems that build upon each other and relate to the world around them. In addition to computer science, each grade at the K-5 level engages in an engineering unit.

At the middle school, eighth-graders may participate through new elective classes, Energy and the Environment and App Creators, which are being introduced this school year.

"We have expanded the opportunities for students to explore their interests and possible paths they might pursue in middle school, high school and beyond," Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Human Resources Dr. Raina Kor said. "Worth noting is that true to STEAM-based learning, we have teachers - certified in math, science, technology and art - all supporting the various opportunities we have built and now offer."



School Safety and Security Enhancements

The Irvington Union Free School District is committed to providing the safest possible environments for its students and staff. To this end, the Board of Education and administration have been working to make enhancements to facilities and practice while continuing to seek methods to enhance the District's emergency readiness.

Thanks to a supportive grant from the PTSA, the District recently installed and activated dozens of new video surveillance cameras across the District. The cameras record activity in common spaces inside and outside of the buildings, with footage being stored for future reference as needed. Additionally, certain camera footage can be viewed in real time to support the operations of safe schools.

To help ensure the safety of its schools, the District has also enriched its training for all staff, enriched drill practices and implemented new visitor protocols utilizing a state-of-the-art visitor management system. In partnership with security consulting group Altaris Security, the District developed an overview of the its emergency protocols to guide the school community on District practices and to provide tips on what to expect should an emergency arise. In addition, fencing has been improved around Dows Lane play spaces to better protect students, and rocks have been strategically placed on school campuses to prevent vehicles from entering areas where students are at play.

A number of long-range safety and security measures are also in the planning process.

"The District remains committed to providing for the safest possible learning spaces," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kristopher Harrison said. "Our partnership around the education of our students is more critical today than ever. To this end, we thank our school community for its continued support."

Strategic Partnership Council

Grounded in the District's strategic plan, Our Vision for Tomorrow, which works to strengthen local connections to and ownerships of its schools, the District has launched the Strategic Partnership Council.

The council is comprised of the leaders of the District's closest partner organizations, including the Board of Education, Bulldog Booster Club, Irvington Education Foundation, PTSA and District administration. Strategic Partnership Council members meet regularly to align and support one another's efforts and to maximize opportunities for all Irvington students.

"These partnerships have worked closely to support one another's work, coordinate efforts and ensure alignment with the District's mission and strategic objectives," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kristopher Harrison said. "Together, there is a strength that provides for every student, every day, and will afford our District a bright future."



Regeneron STS Scholars

Seniors Jacob Dunefsky and Anna Horowitz, members of the high school Science Research Program, have been named 2019 Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholars. Dunefsky and Horowitz are among 300 semifinalists nationwide who were selected from an applicant pool of 1,964 students based on their exceptional research skills, commitment to academics, innovative thinking and promise as scientists.

Area All-State Ensembles

Fifteen high school students - Richard Ackerman (viola), Ethan Chang (trumpet), Jagger Clark (bass), Mary Cuff (cello), Sohum Gala (violin), Sarah Garcia (soprano), Noah Kossowsky (bass), Taylor Lee (cello), Anika Manchanda (violin), Sebastian Ramos-Roux (violin), Maxwell Riseman (tenor), Ella Roth (soprano), Esha Thaker (violin), Robert Yun (viola) and Chrysmine Wong (violin) - were selected for Area All-State music ensembles by the Westchester County School Music Association for its 2018 Area All-State Festival Concert.

National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists

Three distinguished seniors - Ethan Chang, Braden Donoian and Chrysmine Wong - have been named semifinalists in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship program. The students, who have shown outstanding scholastic achievement, are among 16,000 high school students nationwide who were awarded the distinction by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. They represent the top 1 percent of students from across the country with the highest scores on the qualifying Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Scan the QR code to the right to read about student achievements or visit this link: www.irvingtonschools.org



Top Spots at Symposium

Members of the high school Science Research program presented their research projects at the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. Elizabeth Lee earned first place in the medicine and health category, while Julia Caldropoli and Chysmine Wong earned third place in the physical science category. Aayushi Jha won fifth place in the environmental science category, Rishikesh Madabhushi won fifth place in the computer science and math category and Hannah Monack won third place in the medical science category.



Seniors Honored as Commended Students

Arielle Ades, Julia Caldropoli, Jacob Dunefsky, Benjamin Flock, Sohum Gala, Anna Horowitz, Aayushi Jha, Samantha Kimura, Jacob Lewin, Rishikesh Madabhushi, Daniel Marshall, Nicole Radlauer and Hwa-Lyang Sugihara were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as Commended Students, an honor given annually to outstanding students who achieve exceptional scores on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Medals at Science Olympiad

Twelve members of the high school Science Olympiad Club - Eadin Block, Anshuman Das, Henry Demarest, Emelyn Juenger, Rishikesh Madabhushi, Anika Manchanda, Katharine McLaughlin, Esha Shenoy, Rebecca Strauss, Esha Thaker, Aeka Tomita and Jerry Wu - earned multiple medals when they competed at the annual regional Science Olympiad.



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Athletic Accomplishments



Cross-Country Race to the Top

The boys fall cross-country team captured the Class C sectional championship title and placed seven runners in the top 30 of the 130 runners in the race: Ryan Flanagan (7), Alex Bjorgvinsson (8), Ian McLure (16), Aidan McLure (18), Ronan Cypher (22), Eric Parke (26) and Henry Demarest (30). In addition, the team won third place in the Class C New York State championships. Top runners Ryan Flanagan and Alex Bjorgvinsson placed 26th and 27th, respectively, out of the 131 runners in the race. The boys winter indoor track and field team captured the League III, C Championship at the Armory on February 3.

Tennis Team Captures League Title

The girls tennis team won its league championship and had six players - Julia Caldropoli, Charlotte Calick, Emily Hanlon, Chloe Harscar, Pia Luthra and Sophia Vatakis - compete in the conference tournament.

Volleyball Team Reaches Sectional Semifinals

The varsity volleyball team had an impressive run in the sectional tournament. The team was seeded No. 11 in Class B

and pulled off two upsets in the opening rounds, then won three straight games to sweep in the quarterfinals. The team lost in the semifinals.

Basketball Coach Makes History

Girls basketball coach Gina Maher, who has been coaching the Bulldogs for 43 years, reached a major milestone in her career - 700 wins. She also made history, becoming the first girls basketball coach in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association's history to reach that milestone. Maher now boasts 727 career coaching victories, 23 league championships, 19 sectional championships, six state titles and five federation championships.



Girls Swimming Wins Sectional Title, Earns Second Place in State

The combined Sleepy Hollow-Hastings-Edgemont-Irvington swimming team won the sectional championship title and earned second place in the state championships. Irvington swimmers Grace Brady and Ava Franks were instrumental in the team's success. Both swimmers advanced to the state championships,

where Franks was crowned a state champion in the 200-meter free relay.

Girls Basketball Captures Sectional, State and Federation Titles

The girls basketball team has won its fifth consecutive Section 1 Class B title, sixth Class B state title and fifth Federation championship title. Junior Abby Conklin and sophomore Grace Thybulle were named to the Federation All-Tournament team, senior Mia Mascone was named Federation tournament MVP and senior Miranda Farman earned the Federation sportsmanship award. With its fifth Federation title, Irvington is one of the most accomplished public schools in the state.

Wrestler and Swimmers Advance to State Championships

Wrestler Cris D'Amelio won the Division II Section One championship title in the 126-pound category and advanced to the state championships. He had a strong performance at the states, winning two matches before being eliminated. Meanwhile, swimmers Connor Vincent and Adrien Pierce competed in the state championships March 1-2 and had an outstanding performance.

Fencers Excel in Individual Performance Meet

Two fencers represented Irvington in the end-of-year individual placement meet, which featured seven schools with more than 70 fencers. Amelie Chusko placed first in the Women's Epee tournament, and Killian Daly placed sixth in the Men's Foil Tournament.