

Highland Central

School District

2017-2018 Budget

MAY 2017

STEM Learning Enhanced with Investment in Districtwide Robotics Initiatives

Last year, Highland students were introduced to the exciting world of robotics through technological gadgets on loan from the Ulster BOCES Technology-On-The-Go program.

The toy-like instructional robots were such a hit with students and teachers that members of the Highland Educational Foundation decided to expand the robotics program with a \$10,000 donation. The Technology Department used the funding to purchase age-appropriate STEM items for each school building.

Continued on page 4

Within moments of removing the robot Sphero from the box, Highland Elementary School Grade 3 student Taso Bakatsias intuitively began programming the app-enabled ball.



PROPOSED 2017-2018 SCHOOL BUDGET MEETS TAX LEVY LIMIT GUIDELINES; Maintains All Existing Student Programs & Services

The Highland Central School District Board of Education has adopted a \$42,866,930 proposed budget for the 2017-2018 school year. The proposal reflects a tax levy increase of **2.9 percent** and **meets the requirements of the New York State tax levy limit formula** for a simple-majority voter approval.

The budget maintains all current levels of programs and services for students in all three buildings. "It's a maintenance budget," explained Superintendent Deborah Haab. "Our goal was to preserve and protect existing student opportunities, while not exceeding the tax cap."

A few retirements have generated some budget savings, and a reduction in a licensed practical nurse position is included as a result of a change in student need. A vacant custodial position will be filled, and a part-time BOCES technology position will be replaced with a full-time, in-house specialist to support our expanded technology and robotics initiative (see pages 4-5).

The majority of the levy increase presented this year is attributed to debt service for prior voter-approved expenditures, including bus purchases and the capital project.

The District received a 4.3 percent increase in State Aid from the current year, although the State is still using a frozen Foundation Aid formula, which withholds \$2.3 million of support to Highland each year. "We are making progress lobbying New York State to fulfill its

commitment to supporting education, but there is still work to be done," said Superintendent Haab. "I'm in frequent contact with our elected officials about this topic."

After several years of strategic management, our fund balance has also been built up to the healthy 4 percent level suggested by the New York State Comptroller's Office. The budget uses \$1.5 million in Fund Balance to offset the impact on the taxpayer.

"Our goal was to preserve and protect existing student opportunities, while not exceeding the tax cap."

-SUPERINTENDENT DEBORAH A. HAAB

A majority of the proposed budget, or 77 percent, is allocated to instructional expenses that directly benefit students. The capital allocation, including voter-approved project costs, represents 15 percent of the budget, and administrative costs account for 8 percent.

WHAT IF THE BUDGET IS DEFEATED?

If the budget is defeated, the Board of Education has the option of either adopting a contingency budget or holding a second vote on either the same budget or a modified one. If the second

Continued on page 2

VOTE ON TUESDAY MAY 16 • 6 AM TO 9 PM • HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL BAND ROOM

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Alan Barone, President
Thomas Miller, Vice President
Kaitlyn Poluzzi, Student Representative

Michael Bakatsias
Susan Gilmore
Ed Meisel
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Deborah Haab, Superintendent
Sarah Dudley-Lemek, Assistant Superintendent
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PROPOSED 2017-2018 SCHOOL BUDGET MEETS TAX LEVY LIMIT GUIDELINES...

Continued from page 1

budget is defeated, a contingency budget is mandated. Rules of the tax levy limit legislation do not allow a tax levy increase under a contingency budget and would result in \$756,209 of budget cuts to non-mandated programs and services.

WHAT WILL THE BUDGET INCREASE COST ME?

The tax levy represents the total amount of taxes the school district needs to support the budget. The cost of the tax levy is shared among all taxpayers included in the tax base. Factors such as assessed property values, equalization rates, tax rates, and exemptions are used to determine actual taxpayer impact. Towns typically do not finalize assessment rolls until early July. The information above represents the estimated increase to a homeowner in the Town of Lloyd and is based on the most current information available.

Estimated Tax Levy Increase

Homeowner's Property Assessment	Estimated Annual Increase	Estimated Monthly Increase
100K	\$82	\$6.87
200K	\$165	\$13.74
300K	\$247	\$20.61

PLEASE VOTE

The community is encouraged to participate in the school budget vote and school board election on Tuesday, May 16th, from 6 AM to 9 PM in the Highland High School Band Room. Alan Barone and Heather Welch are running unopposed for two seats on the Board of Education. If anyone has any questions about the budget, please contact the District Office at (845) 691-1014.

Polls will be open on Tuesday, May 16, from 6 AM to 9 PM in the Highland High School Band Room

Am I Eligible to Vote?

In order to vote you must be:

- ★ 18 years of age or older.
- ★ A citizen of the United States.
- ★ A resident of the Highland Central School District for at least 30 days immediately prior to the vote.

Voter registration is required to vote in the School District Budget Vote and School Board Elections. Unregistered voters should call Lisa Cerniglia at (845) 235-0739 no later than Thursday, May 11, to complete a voter registration form. Voters currently registered with the County Board of Elections may also vote in the School District Budget Vote and School Board Elections.

How Can I Obtain an Absentee Ballot?

Absentee Ballots are available for residents who are unable to vote at the polls on Tuesday, May 16. For more information about obtaining Absentee Ballots, please call Lisa Cerniglia at (845) 235-0739.

Are Copies of the Budget Available?

Copies of the Proposed Budget are available at all of the District's buildings, as well as at the Highland High School Band Room. Stop by one of the following locations to obtain a copy:

- ★ High School
- ★ Middle School
- ★ Elementary School
- ★ Business Office
- ★ District Website
- ★ Highland Public Library

As required by law, copies of Part I of the District's School Report Card, as issued by the New York State Education Department, are also available for your review and are attached to our budget document. The report includes the State Accountability Status for all schools in the District, as well as a Fiscal Accountability Supplement. Part II of the mandated Report Card is not scheduled for release until June. Please visit the District Office for more details or to review the State's report.

Audience Enchanted by Student Performance of BEAUTY and the BEAST

On February 24, the Highland High School Harlequins proudly presented Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, Jr.

Under the direction of Music teacher and play director Lynda Keech, approximately 40 cast and crew members, along with staff members and parent volunteers, rehearsed and prepared for the production for nearly three months.

Keech says that participating in the school play was not only a great way to get to know fellow students, but was also a way to learn valuable life skills. "Theater is more than just acting," she says. "Theater helps to build self-confidence. It also helps students improve their skills in communication, collaboration, time management, meeting deadlines, concentration, and problem solving."

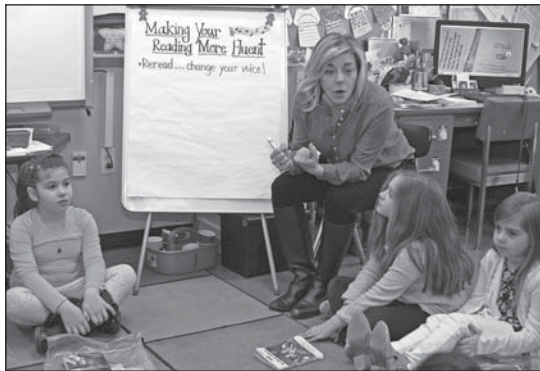
Hailey Gallinari, a junior who played Belle, said, "The most valuable life lesson I learned during the musical was how to cooperate with others, with different personalities and varying levels of experience."



Elementary School Literacy Curriculum Reinvented through Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

Highland Elementary School (HES) has embraced a new literacy initiative. The Reading Units of Study program, developed by the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project of Columbia University, is a nationally recognized program that provides teachers with strategies to help create lifelong readers.

The program encourages uninterrupted, independent reading time and includes mini-lessons that support foundational skills and reading comprehension for students in Kindergarten through Grade 5.



Grade 2 teacher Mary Beth Saso reviews reading strategies with children during Reader's Workshop.

"The program really teaches the whole reader," said Highland Elementary School Grade 2 teacher Mary Beth Saso. "It's not all about phonics or vocabulary, but about connecting students to how reading and talking about books will help them grow as readers. The methods taught have created readers who are excited about reading, and what teacher doesn't want their students to be thrilled about reading?"

Assistant Principal Kathleen Sickles, who is lead advisor for the program, said the program works because it is aligned vertically. "Lessons build upon one another," she explained. "The goal is to have students think critically across all curriculums and all types of text—including math, science, social studies, and even novels."

The program, which is offered through Ulster BOCES, includes instructional support, professional development, and coaching.

Ulster BOCES Literacy Content Specialist Kathy Simpson meets with HES staff once a week to offer ongoing support.

According to Simpson, the new initiative, called Reader's Workshop, replaces long lectures with targeted lessons that emphasize fluency, vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension. It also scraps the one-book-fits-all approach in favor of classroom libraries that are filled with titles that cover a variety of subjects and reading levels.

Sickles said she is very proud of how hard the faculty has been working to bring this program to life with their students every day. "I know we will reap the rewards of this program in the years ahead," she concluded.

"Gone are the days when everyone pulls out the same story and takes turns reading a paragraph," Saso said. "That's because not every student is at the same reading level or enjoys the same stories. This method allows them to explore topics that interest them. If they are interested in what they are reading, they will naturally develop a love of reading."

Saso said that on average, her young students spend 30 minutes a day reading independently in class, but adds that many of them also read at home.



Grade 2 students Annika Kaleita (left) and Ciara Teamer read to one another, an exercise which increases fluency.



New Elementary School Counselor Kristin Candia enjoys working with children on character-building and other lifelong skills.

New Elementary School Position Offers Crisis Management, Counseling & Character-Building

According to the Elementary School Counselors Association, early identification and intervention of children's academic and social/emotional needs is essential for removing barriers to learning and promoting academic achievement.

"The Board of Education recognized the need for increasing guidance, intervention, and mental health support during the elementary years and agreed to add a new position in the 2016-2017 school year," says Superintendent Deborah Haab. "At a young age, students begin developing decision-making, communication, and life skills, as well as character values and attitudes toward school. By offering comprehensive developmental support – including education, prevention, and intervention services – we can start building a foundation for future success."

To fill this vital role, Kristin Candia has been appointed as our new Highland Elementary School counselor. Ms. Candia has 12 years of counseling experience, including eight years at Highland High School.

"I always wanted to be a school counselor," Candia says, "but I love it even more now that I get to go into the classroom and teach character-building skills that the students will be able to use throughout their lifetime."

"Elementary school counselors are a relatively new concept, but very necessary," Candia explains. "Today's students are exposed to all sorts of challenges starting at a very young age — socially, academically, and technologically. To help ensure they enter the Middle School with the skills they need, guidance needs to be fostered during early childhood."

Candia is proud to be coaching students on how to show empathy, problem-solve, and manage anger. She is currently using a solution-focused curriculum called Second Step.

In addition to character building, part of her job involves group and individual counseling, as well as crisis management.

Candia holds a master's degree in school counseling from the University of Buffalo.

"We are grateful to the Board and community for approving the addition of this position in the budget," says Superintendent Haab. "The services available to students are really important to addressing challenges faced by today's students."

Middle School Students Excited by Inquiry-Based Science Lessons

There is a lot of merit to the old teaching adage, “Tell me and I’ll forget, show me and I’ll remember, involve me and I’ll understand why.”

Highland Middle School teachers are using this premise to transform instruction. Using inquiry-based learning – an educational approach in which teachers enable learners to construct their own understanding and become problem solvers and critical thinkers – students learn how to gather, analyze, and evaluate information themselves.

According to Grade 6 Science teacher Linda Madden, “Instead of a professor standing in front of the class lecturing about kinetic energy and Newton’s Third Law, students explore the best cardboard design to encapsulate and protect a hard boiled egg, which is then dropped free fall-style from a certain height.”

Madden recalls that in past years, when the traditional lecture approach was used to teach this topic, students had zero success in a post-lesson egg-drop experiment. This year, after teaching the same concepts using the inquiry-based format, she had nine teams successfully drop the egg without breaking it. “It was great seeing the different designs students came up with to protect their eggs. They definitely thought outside of the box,” she added.

Madden, a 25-year education veteran, adds that teaching this method isn’t as easy as you think. It’s sometimes hard for teachers to break the habit of guiding students step by step. “It’s hard for teachers to resist coming in and offering too much assistance during the painful and bumpy process of trial and error, but it is this very resistance that allows the students to learn and grow organically. I love teaching this way. Watching students discover the answers on their own is exhilarating. What I’ve noticed is that inquiry-based learning makes the students more accountable for what they are learning,” said Madden.

Besides learning how to problem-solve, students also work to their strengths. “Teaming is an important aspect,” Madden explained. “I often connect what they are learning about the team to their success in their future jobs.”

What is most exciting is that students come to school eager to learn science. Many students are going home and building their own projects and returning to school with new and improved observations. Students come to class on their lunch break to see if they can test new theories. “And what teacher doesn’t want to see that?” Madden said.

This shift in teaching is not limited to just Madden’s classroom. The entire Middle School Science department team has embraced changes to their curriculum. Grade 7 Science teachers Jordan Chen and Dave Cunningham have restructured their Biology and Earth Science curriculum and are each focusing on just one of the specialty areas and swapping students mid-point, a change they feel will enhance student learning. Grade 8 teacher Kevin Rizzo has also integrated inquiry-based learning into his Living Environment (Biology) course, and is seeing a similar explosion in student engagement and the deeper level of learning that Madden has experienced.

Principal Dan Wetzel is thrilled with how excited students are to learn. He sees the inquiry-based approach as not just a teaching strategy, but also as an incubator for the scientific minds the country needs. “This is how we’re going to create scientists,” he said.



Science teacher Linda Madden with students Trevor Ebert, Adriana Rodgers, Mollie Lass, and Jeremiah Fisher.

STEM Learning Enhanced with Investment

Continued from page 1

“The goal is to get kids excited about STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects,” says Director of Technology Carol Potash. “Having students learn code and use computational skills early on is an important 21st century skill,” she adds.

The new educational tools are set to make their big debut in May during a special reveal celebration at each of the three schools.

A group of students was recently given a sneak peek at some of the new equipment. They intuitively began to investigate, question, play, test, and create.

“These items are meant to enrich our students’ education. It’s proven that classrooms are more engaging when students learn by doing,” says Potash.

The items slated for the Elementary School are very tactile and colorful and designed to engage kids in a playful manner. The equipment includes Sphero (a spherical robot that is controlled by a tablet),



Highland Elementary School Grade 3 student Elizabeth Harris demonstrates the user-friendly construction robots called Cublets.

Creativity and Problem-Solving

Highland High School Library Media Specialist Linda Fonda was so eager to start a makerspace that she decided to go a little rogue. She freed up some space, brought in a couple of her own educational games, and ordered a few STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) kits with money donated from the school’s book fair. Her thought was that if she built it, they would come. And they have.

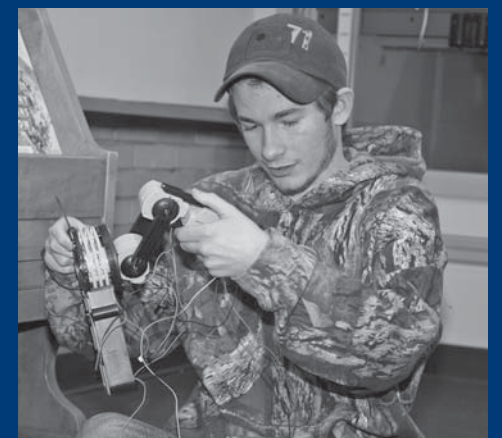
A makerspace is a collaborative workspace where people with shared interests gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.

According to Fonda, the new makerspace has brought about a new kind of excitement in the library. “Today’s libraries aren’t only places where you quietly select a book and sit down and read. Libraries are now about collaboratively designing, exploring, and learning,” she says. “Yes, students using this space sometimes get loud; yes, they sprawl out on the floor; and yes, they sometimes get excited about racing

their robots. Libraries have to grow with the times.”

Sophomore Shawn VanNorstrand says, “I like working with my hands, so having this opportunity to build stuff during my study hall has been a lot of fun.” He adds, “Because these projects aren’t assigned, tinkering on them makes the time go by fast and doesn’t make it feel like a chore.”

Students can work on projects individually or in groups. “I’ve seen big differences in social skills, creativeness, and in leadership,” says Fonda. “Kids who previously kept to



Sophomore Nickolas Sutcliffe constructs a robotic arm in the library media center’s new makerspace.

in Districtwide Robotics Initiatives

Osmo (a gaming accessory for the iPad that teaches coding, words, and numbers), Cubelets (modular robotics pieces designed to teach big lessons behind complex systems such as design thinking and construction), and Puzzlets (an interactive video game that teaches coding, math, and color theory).

The Middle School will receive a 3D printer and LEGO robotic kits. The High School will get a 3D printer and several Arduino robotic kits.

For junior Arianna Ranalli, the infusion of robotics into her courses has been inspiring. "Engineering was always something that I had considered pursuing in college and as a profession, but I had never had much experience with it prior to working with robotics, coding, and 3D printing in my AP physics and pre calc classes this year," she says. "Robotics, coding, and 3D printing allowed me to be creative while presenting a challenge that when solved, left me with a better understanding of the courses I applied them to. They offered a different approach to learning that was not only fun but effective, and I hope that I'll be able to use them in my classes again."

"Robotics, coding, and 3D printing allowed me to be creative while presenting a challenge that when solved, left me with a better understanding of the courses I applied them to."

—Arianna Ranalli, HHS Grade 10

Ignited with New Makerspaces



Junior Kathryn Bevilacqua (right) shows Library Media Specialist Linda Fonda a robot she designed and constructed in the new makerspace.

Fonda says she is looking forward to eventually having makerspaces in all three Highland schools. A number of teachers throughout the High School already have classroom makerspaces, including Science teacher Chris Cozzolino, Math teacher Stefanie Whiston-Trapani, and Special Education teacher Maureen Pesano.

"Makerspaces are a great learning tool and eventually I see them being used as part of a teacher's curriculum," Fonda concludes.

themselves are now sitting in groups and working together assembling things."

The makerspace cabinet contains bins filled with construction kits like LEGOS and K'NEX, build-your-own robotic devices, and small circuitry kits. But it also includes do-it-yourself projects like Loop Loom Bracelets and a craft kit where items can be made from Duct Tape.

"The maker mindset is about creating something out of nothing, which doesn't always revolve around high tech gadgets," Fonda explains.



Sophomore Shawn VanNorstrand enjoys working with his hands and says that tinkering with projects in the makerspace is fun.

Science Olympiad Team Earns Regional Second Place & Advances to State Competition

The Highland Science Olympiad team, which includes students in Grades 7, 8, and 9, recently competed in the New York State Science Olympiad Championship in Syracuse. They qualified for the Statewide event after earning a second place team title in the regional competition.

Coached by Middle School teachers Kevin Rizzo and Michael Watts, Highland was one of only three small schools to make it to the State finals. There were 38 teams in total.

Highland students earned a fourth place State finish in both the Scrambler and the Bottle Rocket challenges. For the Scrambler, students designed and operated a rocket tasked with safely transporting an egg. Winning is based on achieving the longest time afloat. The Bottle Rocket event calls for a student-designed vehicle and propulsion system to safely transport an egg as close to a wall as possible. Students also placed 15th in Mission Possible, an event that involves making a Rube Goldberg-like contraption.

Middle School technology teacher Michael Watts praised the students for their commitment and tenacity. "The team worked hard all year—meeting weekly, preparing, studying, and practicing STEM-related events such as Food Science, Rocks & Minerals, Mystery Design, Hovercraft Technology, Anatomy, and Wind Power."



Fourth place winners of the Scrambler challenge are Jake Duncan (Grade 8) and Isabela Cuya (Grade 9).



Fourth place winners of the Bottle Rocket event are Olivia CrimiVaroli (Grade 9) and Luke Munson (Grade 8).



Middle School teachers Kevin Rizzo and Michael Watts with the Science Olympiad team, which is made up of 15 students in Grades 7, 8, and 9.

BUDGET VOTE • MAY 16
6 AM - 9 PM HIGHLAND HS BAND ROOM

School District Budget Notice

OVERALL BUDGET PROPOSAL	Budget Adopted for the 2016-17 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2017-18 School Year *
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 41,522,885	\$ 42,866,930	\$ 42,110,721
Increase/Decrease for the 2017-18 School Year		\$ 1,344,045	\$ 587,836
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		3.24%	1.42%
Change in the Consumer Price Index		1.26%	
A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount,	\$ 26,051,044	\$ 26,807,253	
B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable	\$0	\$0	
C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **	\$0	\$0	
D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy	\$0	\$0	
E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)	\$ 26,051,044	\$ 26,807,253	\$ 26,051,044
F. Total Permissible Exclusions	\$ 1,003,782	\$ 1,241,177	
G. School Tax Levy Limit, Excluding Levy for Permissible Exclusions	\$25,047,262	\$25,566,076	
H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, Excluding Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E - B - F + D)	\$25,047,262	\$25,566,076	
I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **	\$0	\$0	
Administrative Component	\$ 3,499,005	\$ 3,588,594	\$ 3,499,005
Program Component	\$31,972,990	\$33,086,262	\$ 32,449,642
Capital Component	\$ 6,050,890	\$ 6,192,074	\$ 6,162,074

* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2017-18 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.

In the event a contingency budget was adopted, pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law, the prior year tax levy would remain the same. Reductions to non-mandated programs and services would be made amounting to \$756,209.

** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)

Description	Amount
School Bus Proposition	\$750,000

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2017-18 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings ¹	\$702

¹ The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2017-18 by the qualified voters of the Highland Central School District, Ulster County, New York, will be held at Highland Central School District in said district on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 between the hours of 6:00am and 9:00pm, prevailing time in the Highland High School Band Room, at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

What You’ll See on the Ballot

Proposition 1: SCHOOL BUDGET

“SHALL THE BOARD OF EDUCATION of the Highland Central School District be authorized to expend the sums of money which will be required for School District purposes for the 2017-18 fiscal year in the amount of \$42,866,930 and to levy the necessary tax therefore?”

Proposition 2: SCHOOL BUS PURCHASE

“SHALL THE BOARD OF EDUCATION of the Highland Central School District be authorized to purchase five (5) 65 or larger passenger buses and three (3) 29 passenger vans, at an aggregate maximum estimated sum of \$750,000, and that the sum of \$750,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of said School District and collected in annual installments, as provided by §416 of the Education Law, and, in anticipation of such tax, obligations of the District may be issued.”

Trustees for Board of Education

You May Vote For Any TWO

- ☐ Alan Barone
- ☐ Heather Welch
- Write-In _____
- Write-In _____

Highland Makes Progress on Capital Project

Highland Central School District’s \$17.5 million capital project, which was approved in October of 2014, is progressing, says Superintendent Deborah Haab. The bulk of the work – which updates infrastructure, modernizes technology, and improves safety and security – should be complete by the end of the coming school year. Most of the site work, including District-wide paving and sidewalk repair, is complete, including resurfacing and fencing at the bus compound. The new Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant aluminum bleachers at the Middle School have also been installed. At the High School, a new scoreboard and improved stairway to the press box, along with leveling and field drainage, have been finished. Phone system upgrades throughout the District are also complete, and new window hardware at the Elementary and High Schools were installed. Masonry work at the Middle School is also finished. Over the summer, the stage curtains at the Elementary School will be replaced, and a new security vestibule will be constructed. Districtwide, security cameras and a new bell system will be installed, and computer networks will be upgraded. At the High School, new lights, sound, and air-conditioning will be added to the auditorium, and the fitness room will also receive a complete rehab. A handicap

lift at the Middle School will be installed, windows will be replaced, and univents will be updated. The security vestibules at the High School and Middle School may also be completed this summer, or will be scheduled for next summer. Some work is planned to be completed in 2018. The Middle School Home and Careers classroom will be remodeled, with work anticipated to be done next January. Some cafeteria updates are planned for next summer.



District Upgrades its Diesel Buses with New, Greener Propane Models

The Highland Central School District (HCSD) rolled out seven new, propane-fueled school buses earlier this year, thanks to the support of last year's voter-approved transportation proposition. The newly acquired vehicles are full-size, 65-passenger, Blue Bird propane buses. They replaced aged, high-mileage diesel models.

The District uses a vehicle replacement strategy to update an identified number of buses each year. "We strategically cycle new buses into our fleet each year to ensure our vehicles don't become too aged or unreliable," explains Business Administrator Louise Lynch.

Voters approved the purchase of nine new vehicles last May. Over the summer, the District received a \$250,000 grant from New York State to help offset the cost of the new buses.

According to HCSD Director of Transportation Douglas Carter, the propane gas-powered buses are more fuel-efficient and produce less carbon dioxide. Carter adds that there is an anticipated cost-savings over time. "Although the initial cost is more expensive than diesel, propane buses have lower maintenance costs," he says.

For drivers like Gloria Lehan, the new buses are a great addition to the fleet. "I was thrilled my route was chosen for use of a new propane bus," she says.

Lehan is particularly impressed by how quietly they run. "Because they are so quiet, I noticed that once the kids get to their seats, they settle down. Neither they, nor I, have to raise our voices to speak above the noise of the engine," she says. "I can also hear conversations taking place in the back of the bus, which helps me predict the possibility of any problems."

Drivers of the seven propane buses had to attend a fueling and driver training course before getting behind the wheel.

Originally Lehan did have some reservations about driving a bus fueled by propane, but after taking the training course she says she wouldn't trade it for anything. "It's such a comfortable ride, and I totally feel safe," she says.

Another benefit is that the buses warm up faster, meaning students aren't boarding a chilly bus during the colder months, Lehan notes.

Carter adds that propane is a natural gas that is locally sourced here in America, and that petroleum is an imported oil. "Although propane buses get fewer miles to the gallon, the fuel's lower price also generates a savings," Carter says.



The District has replaced seven old diesel buses with new, greener propane models. This year's budget includes a proposition to purchase an additional five propane vehicles.



School bus driver Gloria Lehan is one of the District's drivers who are trained to operate the new propane school buses.

FOCUS OF PROPOSITION 2: SCHOOL BUS REPLACEMENT

This year, the District is asking voter permission to purchase eight new school buses. Proposition 2 seeks approval to purchase five 65-passenger energy-efficient propane buses and three gas-fueled 29-passenger vans, at a total cost not to exceed \$750,000.

Reimbursement through Transportation Aid is expected to defray 59.1 percent of the cost, which leaves \$306,750 to be funded through local taxes. The tax impact of this proposition would not be seen by taxpayers until the 2018-2019 budget, at which time it would cost a maximum of \$5.29 a year per \$100,000 of assessed value. This cost would remain in tax bills for five full years, representing a total maximum cost of \$26.45 per \$100,000 of assessed value over the life of the loan.

Join Our Team! Bus Drivers Needed

If you or someone you know enjoys working with children and has a mature attitude and a flexible schedule, then you should consider driving for Highland Central School District. Although drivers possessing a commercial driver's license (CDL) with a passenger and school endorsement are preferred, we will train a promising candidate.

Prospective drivers must pass a pre-employment physical, and undergo drug and alcohol testing before driving. For those interested, please submit an application to Superintendent Deborah Haab at 320 Pancake Hollow Road, Highland, New York 12528.

- Salary/Pay Scale: \$15.66/hr.
- Benefits possible.
- Drivers work a split shift of 4-5 hours per day.
- The job follows the school calendar of 180 days.
- Opportunities to drive extra hours are available during field and sports trips.

Have a Safe Trip

Safe Fleet and Seon has announced that Highland School District's Transportation Department was selected as a winner in the 2017 United Against Bullying (UAB) Grant Program. The award will provide \$1500 to support the development of an educational anti-bullying program.



TUESDAY MAY 16

**6 AM - 9 PM
HIGHLAND HS
BAND ROOM**

The top ten students at Highland High School. Front row, from left to right: Valedictorian Alexa Langseder, Amanda Darmochwal, Kaitlyn Poluzzi, Carina Scivolette, Kirti Shenoy. Second row, from left to right: Calvin Ling, Alejandro Mendez Matias, Dhruv Odedra, Salutatorian Frank Alfonso, Jr., Celia Gottlieb.



Highland High School Names Top 10 Scholars of Class of 2017

Highland High School (HHS) has announced the top ten students, including the valedictorian and salutatorian, of the Class of 2017. These students reached the highest level of achievement, not only in academics, but also in an array of athletic, extracurricular, and community endeavors.

Valedictorian Alexa Langseder leads her class with a 102.37 GPA. She plans to study chemical or electrical engineering in college, although she has not yet decided between Rochester Institute of Technology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, or the State University of New York at Buffalo. She is the daughter of Dean and Debbie Langseder of Highland.

Salutatorian Frank Alfonso, Jr. has a 101.78 GPA and is planning to attend either Marist College, Furman University, or Clemson University (both in South Carolina) and major in business finance with a minor in sports management. He is the son of Frank and Sharon Alfonso of Highland.

Along with announcing the valedictorian and salutatorian, HHS also named the next eight high-achieving academic students. They are: Dhruv Odedra, Kirti Shenoy, Calvin Ling, Celia Gottlieb, Alejandro Mendez Matias, Kaitlyn Poluzzi, Amanda Darmochwal, and Carina Scivolette.

You can read more about Alexa's and Frank's impressive achievements on our website at www.highland-k12.org.

High School's "Ten-Minute Play" Challenged Students to Express their Creativity

A group of Highland High School (HHS) students in Grade 9 English were each recently tasked with writing a 10-minute play.

All they had to do was come up with a clever plot, incorporate riveting characters, include powerful dialogue, and engage the audience—all within a 10-minute timeframe. How hard could it be?

According to HHS English and Theatre teacher Krista Petrosoff, her students worked hard and were able to pull it off.

This year's play was a compilation of six shorter works written by students Elise Murtaugh, Alexa Kelly, Brianna Acosta, Penelope Dilorio, Mikalia McClinton Thibault, Nat Garcia, Isabella Berlingieri, and Jamie Carlson.

Students not only learned how to be a playwright, but they also got to cast, act, and direct the show.

Aside from writers, the cast and crew for the show included about 30 students.

From left to right: writers of the 10-Minute Play include (bottom row) Mikalia McClinton (Gr. 10), Penelope Dilorio (Gr. 11), Jamie Carlson (Gr. 11), Alexa Kelly (Gr. 9) (row two) Elise Murtaugh (Gr. 9), Brianna Acosta (Gr. 9), Nat Garcia (Gr. 9), and standing is Isabella Berlingieri (Gr. 9).



Points of Pride

Great things are happening throughout the District, both in the classrooms and after school during clubs and sports. Here is just a sampling of our students' many achievements and experiences!

Basketball Team Brings Home the Championship

Congratulations to the Varsity Girls Basketball team on their great season! The team won the Section 9, Class B Championships in a fierce game against Spackenkill High School, winning 49-31.

Music to Our Ears

Eighty-one Highland student musicians were selected to participate in the Ulster County Music Educators Association's All-County Honor Festivals this year. The All-

County experience culminates with a concert that includes students from 10 local school districts and is open to parents and the general public.

Crossing Borders

Highland's Model United Nations (UN) team participated in an international competition in Montreal, Canada, this winter. Model UN is an afterschool club where students learn about diplomacy and international relations by participating in a simulation of the United Nations General Assembly. In their mock roles, students make speeches, draft resolutions, negotiate with allies and adversaries, resolve conflicts, and problem-solve.

There are Two Sides to Every Story

Students in Steve Masson's Presentational Speaking course, a college-level program through SUNY Ulster, are learning not to take no for an answer. Masson has

introduced students to the topic of debate. The coursework will help students understand and communicate different points of view, as well as help them analyze controversies, evaluate evidence, and construct arguments to support their point of view.

Take That to the Bank!

A team of Highland High School students recently participated in a challenge hosted by the Federal Reserve. The competition tested students' understanding of the U.S. economy, monetary policymaking, and the role of the Federal Reserve System. Unlike other teams who engage in full-time economic courses throughout the year, Highland students are involved only through an extracurricular club that meets after school.

Co-advisors John Manganiello and Christina Saylor both explained that many of the students join the

club to further explore their interests in the financial field and to put their skills to work. "Our students always demonstrate a tenacity that rivals the other full-time teams," said Saylor, adding that students received high praise from interviewers, who were senior economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.



A team of Highland students tested their economic analysis, monetary policy decision-making, public speaking, and teamwork skills during a competition at the Federal Reserve in New York City.