



Community Newsletter

Rush-Henrietta
Rush-Henrietta Central School District

Fall 2013

R-H Students Achieving More, Tests Reveal

Meeting the increased demands of the new Common Core Learning Standards has been challenging, but the work is essential. The Rush-Henrietta Central School District is pleased to share that we have made significant progress in meeting these new expectations.

In Rush-Henrietta, we are working hard to make sure our students are ready for success after they graduate from high school. That is why our district priorities last year included an emphasis on improving student learning in English language arts and math. In these areas, the state had mandated new Common Core Learning Standards to better prepare children for college and career success. In the process, it directed us to adopt instructional practices to help students meet and exceed these more demanding academic standards.

In response, we successfully aligned our instruction with the new standards in all core content areas. Students are engaging in learning activities that require the use of more complex text and higher-level thinking and writing skills. In addition, at every school, teachers are using common assessments aligned with the new standards to monitor student progress and begin academic interventions as needed. Our commitment to student achievement is stronger than ever.

The state also informed us last year there would be more rigorous state assessments at grades 3-8. The new tests are designed to measure how well our students are achieving and hold us accountable for their academic growth. Before these tests were given this past spring, districts statewide were warned that fewer students would pass because the revised exams would be much more rigorous - and this was the case! Passing rates on the assessments declined 20 to 30 percent. When we look closely at Rush-Henrietta's data, though, we see evidence of significant and sustained student growth. For example:

- Two years ago, Rush-Henrietta passing rates on English language arts state assessments at grades 3-8 were near the bottom 25 percent passing rates for public schools in Monroe County. This year, we are close to the mid-point.
- Two years ago, Rush-Henrietta passing rates on math state assessments at grades 3-8 were below the mid-point for public schools in Monroe County. This year, we are approaching the highest passing rates in Monroe County.

Even better, the good news extends beyond grades 3-8. For example, we saw significant improvement in the number of students who passed the A2T Regents Exams at the Senior High School. In A2T, our passing rate last spring was 7 percent higher than the previous year and 16 percent higher than two years ago. This improvement moved our students from among the lowest- to the highest-performing students in Monroe County.

We invite the entire community to join us in celebrating this continued rise in student achievement. Clearly, our practice of standards-based instruction is helping students meet and exceed these more demanding academic standards. We thank you for your support!

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Rush-Henrietta Celebrates 120 AP Scholars

We are proud to announce that 120 students from Rush-Henrietta Senior High School earned special honors from the College Board in recognition of exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program exams. Sixty-two Rush-Henrietta students were named AP Scholars, while 18 have been designated AP Scholar With Honor, 34 have been named AP Scholar With Distinction, and six have earned National AP Scholar status.

To be an AP Scholar, a student must receive grades of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams. To become an AP Scholar With Honor, a student must receive an average grade of 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. Those earning the Scholar With Distinction honor received an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of the exams. The prestigious National AP Scholar status was granted to students receiving an average of at least 4 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams.

AP Scholar

Genaro Albarran, Courtney Barber, Megan Brady, Kyla Brown, Khadesha Bryant, Joell Caballero, Benjamin Cammett, Naomi Campbell, Riley Carr, Michael Cole, Kylie Connell, Laura Cumbo, Ryan Denk, Donald Diep, Rachel Dobjeleski, Erick Dytche, Sean Edelman, Alyssa Farsace, Amanda Flotterton, Dimitry Galitsky, Michael Giuliano, Andrew Guglielmo, Elizabeth Hirschman, Aleena Jamal, Emma Jones, Josephine Keenan, Michael Larkin, Eric Lee, Katherine Leo, Victoria Mangino, Jared Marshall, Matthew Massaro, Samantha Mastin, Timothy McCormick, Rebekah McNeill, Amanda McNelly, Jacqueline Minemier, Emily Modeen, Kyle O'Brien, Kevin Palmeri, Spencer Phillips, Jennifer Plouffe, Dylan Pritchard, Mary Quattlebaum, Kerriann Reynolds, Emma Rhoads, Katarina Schutt, Nicholas Severson, Eitan Sirkovich, Emmett Spence, Rana Sulieman, Nicole Sweazy, Mahagani Thomas, Jackson Underwood, Joshua Wang, Trevor Welborn, Jarek Wierzba, Marlena Winn, Jessica Wisniewski, Tessa Wisniewski, Rachel Yuhas, and Jaylan Yuskel.

AP Scholar With Honor

Samantha Bahr, Bijia Chen, Brandon DeTamble, Zachary Duris, Christina Everdyke, Natalia Harris, Zachary Horton, Brandon Keough, Chandler Kozyra, Eliot Leubner, Mariana Morales, Anna Neumaier, Andrew Ochs, Christian Pierce, Philip Sheehan, Victoria Simmonds, Devin Smith, and Alexander Vesty

AP Scholar With Distinction

Jordan Bachmann, Sandra Chang, Vignesh Chari, Joseph Curtiss, Sara DeFranco, Danielle DeLooze, Katelyn Dietz, Daniel Drummond, Robert Exler, Frank Femia, Jany Gonzalez, Brandon Ha, Erik Howell, Johnathon Igleheart, Skyler Kilmer, Clarke LaCelle, Alana MacDonald, Matthew Marks, Valanti Marou, Joshua McGough, Nezar Mehanna, Varun Mehta, Daniel Meiller, Bryn Mugnolo, Max Murray, Nicholas Passero, Kevin Reitano, Anne Repka, Jeremy Saxton, Joshua Saxton, Emilie Scardilla, Bethany Schmidt, Patrick Shenal, Aiman Syeda, and Charles Woolaver

National AP Scholar

Jordan Bachmann, Robert Exler, Matthew Marks, Kevin Reitano, Anne Repka, and Aiman Syeda

The number of Rush-Henrietta students receiving College Board recognition is 50 percent higher than just four years ago. Please join us in congratulating these students and accept our thanks for making these academic opportunities possible for our students.



R-H Information is Only a Click Away!

Visit the district's redesigned website for comprehensive information about Rush-Henrietta schools. Also, consider subscribing to one of the district's most popular services, E-News, which provides brief e-mail notifications, announcements, and reminders about important meetings, activities, and issues. Visit www.rhnet.org today!

Parents Indicate High Levels of Satisfaction With R-H Schools

More than 930 parents in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District responded to our first Superintendent's Parent Poll, sharing their impressions of how the school year started for their child.

In past years, Rush-Henrietta has used one annual parent survey to seek feedback from parents about how to improve our schools. This year, the district is asking those questions as part of five shorter polls throughout the school year. For the first poll, which was offered in October, the results are as follows:

- 93 percent of parents said they received the information they needed to get their child off to a good start this school year. This information included the student schedule, supply list, district calendar, and school building information.
- 92 percent of parents said they have access to information about their child's classroom activities and assignments through newsletters, e-mail, curriculum nights, open houses, or classroom web pages.
- 93 percent of parents said they have been informed of opportunities to get involved in their child's school, through parent groups, parent surveys, shared decision-making committees, and volunteer opportunities.
- 90 percent of parents said they feel welcomed at their child's school.



In a recent poll, parents affirmed Rush-Henrietta's efforts to get the school year off to a good start for students and families. These students are from Winslow Elementary School.

We appreciate your feedback and take it seriously. For example, in the comments section of the most recent poll, we noted frustration with the mailing of schedules for students in grades 6-12. We are working to address this concern. Please watch for additional parent polls throughout the school year on the district website at www.rhnet.org.

Parents Encouraged to Review Student Grades Online



Parents and students are encouraged to check grades at home using an online resource called ParentConnect.

Parents often ask teachers to share student progress in a more timely fashion so they can provide their child with additional support at home. That's one reason the Rush-Henrietta Central School District now offers ParentConnect to all parents and students in grades 6-12. This tool, which provides online access to teacher gradebooks, is already being used by more than 60 percent of our secondary-school parents.

ParentConnect provides students and parents with more timely access to assignments, grades, five-week reports, and attendance information. Usernames and passwords for the online system were mailed to parents in August. If you need help logging in to your account, please contact the main office or counseling center at your child's school. You can also visit the district website at www.rhnet.org/parentconnect to read answers to frequently asked questions.

To view your student's progress, visit www.rhnet.org and click ParentConnect in the Quick Links menu on the left side of the page. If you need further information after viewing grades on ParentConnect, please contact your child's teacher. Thank you for your continued involvement in your child's education!



Students, Community Benefit from Phase III Renovations



Instead of using the cramped high school cafeteria for practices, cheerleaders will be able to use the new gymnasium, which allows for multiple activities to be held at once. It's one of the many ways our students will benefit from the renovations occurring at the Senior High School.

After rededicating Elmer Gordon Stadium in October and opening a new gymnasium at the Senior High School in December, the third and final phase of the Rush-Henrietta Facility Renovations Plan is off to a great start!

Our community overwhelmingly approved the third phase of the district's Facility Renovations Plan in 2011. Known as Phase III, the project is designed to improve the Senior High School campus by adding a new gymnasium, expanding the fitness center, renovating athletic fields, and creating a new counseling center and more classrooms.

Throughout the process, the project has, to a great extent, remained remarkably on schedule. This fall, new fields for football, lacrosse, soccer, and softball were completed. In December, more than a month ahead of schedule, the high school will open the doors to its new gymnasium during the Friday, Dec. 6, home basketball game.

This winter, the district will begin renovating the old gymnasium. That space will be converted into an expanded fitness center, weight and wrestling rooms, team rooms, and more. Students participating in the physical education program will benefit in many ways, as well. In addition to having access to three separate stations inside the new gym, physical education classes will have access to the new softball field, multipurpose field, and track. As construction work continues, plans call for a second floor to be added to the old gymnasium. This space will be turned into a new counseling center to support academic achievement. After this is accomplished, the focus will turn to creating additional classroom space. Each step has to be followed in a particular order to ensure that the district is able to create the maximum amount of new, usable space.

The district remains grateful for the community's continued support of our schools, and is excited about the new academic and athletic opportunities that the Phase III renovations will provide for our students for many years to come. Thank you!

Did You Know?

- Consistent with the district's philosophy to save money ahead of time, Rush-Henrietta had the required combination of funding to pay for the project before groundbreaking. The state will reimburse the district for 65 percent of the project cost for the Phase III renovations.
- The new gymnasium can accommodate three separate sporting activities at one time. This will be useful during physical education classes, when three different stations can be running, as well as during afterschool practices. It is conceivable, for example, that baseball players, cheerleaders, and volleyball players can practice at one time in this new space. Our athletes will be able to train more often, under better conditions, and at more reasonable times of the day than ever before.
- Much like other modern high school gymnasiums in Monroe County, the new gym at the Senior High School features a retractable batting cage that will allow for more practice time when spring weather does not cooperate, a built-in volleyball net that descends from the ceiling, and an indoor pole vault area for track-and-field practices.
- The attention to detail involved with this project is immediately noticeable from the outside of the new gymnasium. The brick that was chosen closely matches the look of the 45-year-old Senior High School.
- To meet building codes, the district was required to provide the fire department with access to the far-reaching corners of the gymnasium. Instead of simply creating an access road, the district has designed an attractive public gathering space near the entrance doors that meets these code requirements.
- Three new concession stands have been included as part of the Phase III project. One is at Elmer Gordon Stadium, while the second is located in the main foyer of the new gymnasium. The third concession area is situated on a south-facing wall of the gymnasium and opens to the outdoors. It is designed to serve visitors who are attending games on the new multipurpose lacrosse and soccer field. These improvements should be a boon to the Senior High School's Sports Boosters club.
- The mechanical room above the new gymnasium houses modern efficiencies such as a heat-recovery wheel. This technology, which is designed to reduce energy costs, collects hot air from the gymnasium, reprocesses it, and distributes it again throughout the building.
- As part of the renovations project, the electrical switchgear at the Senior High School has been replaced. The school's electrical capacity was designed originally to handle demands common in the 1960s – mainly, being able to provide enough electricity to keep the lights operating. With the skyrocketing demand for electricity because of increasing technology use, the high school's electrical capabilities had reached their limit. This upgrade will pay dividends to students and the community for years to come.

Renovating Elmer Gordon Stadium

One aspect of the Phase III project involved the renovation of multiple athletic fields that will serve students and community members for decades to come. The district built a sand-based multipurpose field suitable for football, lacrosse, and track, and a second sand-based, multipurpose field suitable for lacrosse and soccer. In addition, with the continued help of the district's facilities and grounds crew, the Senior High School also is home to a new field for the varsity girls softball team, as well as a variety of new areas for track-and-field activities. The improvements at Elmer Gordon Stadium also include new bathrooms, a new press box, and a new concession area.



At left, the new field at Elmer Gordon Stadium, which will be home to the football, lacrosse, and track teams, is getting rave reviews. At right, from right to left, Diane McBride, president of the Board of Education; Alexis Gordon '09; Quentin Gordon '03; Quentin Gordon '71; Shelley Gordon; Phillip '05; and Rosie Mitchell, Bob Bower, and Jean Chaudari, board members, at the rededication of Elmer Gordon Stadium.

Renovation Schedule at a Glance

The Phase III renovations project began in earnest in 2012 and is on schedule to be completed in 2015. With the opening of a new gymnasium is open at the Senior High School in December 2013, construction crews are beginning to renovate the old gymnasium. Throughout the winter and summer, work will be ongoing to convert the former gym into an expanded fitness center, weight and wrestling rooms, team rooms, and more. In addition, a second floor will be added and this space will be turned into a new counseling center to support academic achievement. The renovation of the old gymnasium into new, more usable space is scheduled to be complete by August 2014. Once this is completed, the focus will turn to creating additional classroom space.

Making the Right Call on Athletic Improvements

David Kaye, the district's architect, believes the community should be especially proud of the renovated athletic fields at Elmer Gordon Stadium. "We did a lot of research when deciding whether to install a turf field of a natural-grass field," he says. "We went with natural grass and it's already clear we made the right choice." In addition to avoiding long-term costs associated with maintaining and replacing artificial-turf fields, the natural-grass fields behind the Senior High School play much cooler, drain remarkably well, and are proving to be incredibly durable.

Tom Stewart, Rush-Henrietta's director of athletics, agrees that our community should be proud of the work accomplished so far through the Phase III project. "The indoor and outdoor improvements push the district to the head of the class," he says. "The facilities we now have at the Senior High School are as good as any in the state of New York, no question about it. Outdoors, the multi-purpose fields are, hands-down, the best grass fields anywhere. And inside, the new gymnasium is enormous, but it is designed in such a way that it's really going to feel like a packed house with a great atmosphere. No matter what the event – whether athletic or academic – every seat will be a great seat. I invite everyone in the community to come to an event this winter and spring and see for themselves."



Four Graduates Inducted



Matthew Allen
Class of 1998

Matthew Allen, MS, RN, PNP-BC, a 1998 Rush-Henrietta graduate, is a pediatric nurse practitioner and clinical nurse specialist at Golisano Children's Hospital at Strong. Those who know Matt describe him as a highly motivated person who sets high standards in the health care field and consistently mentors others to achieve

their professional goals.

After graduating from St. John Fisher College and working as a bedside nurse, Matt enrolled in the University of Rochester's School of Nursing. He received his degree as a pediatric nurse practitioner and focused his efforts on improving health care for children.

In addition to his nursing work at Golisano Children's Hospital, Matt serves as a pediatric clinical instructor for Wegmans School of Nursing at St. John Fisher College. In this role, he helps prepare nursing students learn to care for seriously ill children and their families. Students describe him as a great teacher who provides a safe and caring atmosphere for learning. In addition, Matt is a legal nurse consultant for lawyers working on medical cases. In all of these areas, he has made significant contributions to the development, education, and professional growth of future generations of nurses, as well as improving advocacy and care for children.

In 2010, Matt was asked to develop a pediatric orthopedic program for Golisano Children's Hospital, a task he successfully accomplished. Most notably, Matt developed the region's first car seat program to address safe transportation of children who have special orthopedic needs. Matt secured the necessary funding, gained approval from the University of Rochester, and helped the program grow within the community. Thanks in part to Matt's good work, U.S. News and World Report magazine recognized Golisano Children's Hospital as having one of the nation's best orthopedic programs in the nation in its most recent Best Children's Hospital rankings.

Matt's personal and professional success is enhanced by his relentless pursuit of improved medical care for children. One of his newest professional challenges is assisting the University of Rochester Medical Center with the development and design of the new Golisano Children's Hospital, which is scheduled to open in 2015.

Matt lives in Henrietta with his wife, Noreen, and their daughter, Hailey.



Jacqueline LaLonde Darcey, M.D.
Class of 1985

Jacqueline LaLonde Darcey, M.D., a 1985 Rush-Henrietta graduate, is an attending physician at Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey. She has made her mark by providing the less fortunate with health care and teaching a new generation of medical professionals.

Jacquie attended Old Dominion University, majoring in biology. She graduated with honors and began her career as a research and development scientist for Hoffman-LaRoche, a New Jersey-based pharmaceutical company.

With her love of science in mind, Jacquie enrolled in medical school at the State University of New York at the Health Sciences Center at Brooklyn. She did her Internal Medicine residency at Morristown Medical Center, an affiliate of Columbia University. There, she received the Lester A. Granet Humanitarian Award, recognizing her compassionate approach to patient care.

In 2003, Jacquie was named Associate Program Director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Morristown Medical Center. Working with patients regardless of their health insurance, she takes great pride in caring for the indigent and their special primary care needs. "It can be a challenge in many ways, she says," but seeing patients know you care when no one else has ever made them feel that way is incredible."

Jacquie continues to advance her knowledge of academic medicine by participating in national academic societies, and regularly shares her knowledge with medical students, residents and other health care professionals.

Jacquie credits two high school science teachers, Bob Patton and Linda Jean Smith, with fostering her love for science, and recalls Terri Mathews-Desant and Wayne Scarborough as teachers who helped her become a better, well-rounded person.

In her personal time, Jacquie leads a community-minded lifestyle. She sings in a chamber choir, participates in a church youth ministry outreach program, and has helped raise money and awareness to combat homelessness. She also organized hurricane relief collections for those affected by Hurricane Sandy. A triathlete, Jacquie plans to assist a person with special needs to achieve his or her dream of running a road race or participating in a biathlon or triathlon.

Jacquie lives in New Jersey with her husband, John, and two children, MacKenzie and Griffin.

into the Hall of Fame



Charles E. Guess
Class of 1979

Charles "Chuck" Guess, a member of the Rush-Henrietta Class of 1979, is a major in the New York State Police Aviation Unit. As commander, Chuck is responsible for 60 personnel and 20 aircraft as well as a broad spectrum of statewide assignments, including law enforcement, executive transport, search and rescue, medevac, disaster

relief and aerial support of Department of Conservation field missions. His 23 years with the New York State Police and a distinguished military career are evidence of his strong dedication to national defense and public safety.

Chuck attended SUNY Brockport and graduated with a bachelor's in History and a minor in Military Science. A member of the Army ROTC, he was a Distinguished Military Graduate and received a regular Army commission upon graduation. He attended Ranger, Airborne, Air Assault, and Northern Warfare schools and U.S. Army Flight School, where he learned to fly helicopters. He left the Army in 1990, having achieved the rank of captain.

After joining the New York State Police, Chuck worked as a trooper on patrol and as an active member of the Mobile Response Team (SWAT) and SCUBA Unit, training other troopers as a firearms instructor and defensive tactics instructor.

Chuck's considerable training and skills made him uniquely qualified to assist at the sites of some of our nation's most devastating events. Following the 1996 crash of TWA Flight 800, he spent four weeks SCUBA diving as part of the state police recovery operations. In 2001, as an officer in both the SCUBA and Mobile Response Team units, he and his team worked tirelessly at Ground Zero, conducting tactical team victim recovery operations for seven months. In addition, due to the loss of many New York Fire Department divers on 9-11, he planned and conducted training for new members of the FDNY SCUBA team, essentially rebuilding the unit.

After graduating from the FBI National Academy training program in Quantico, Va., in 2005, Chuck rose through the ranks, continuing his work in Emergency Management as head of SWAT, SCUBA, K-9, Bomb Disposal and HAZMAT.

Chuck has been married 29 years, has two daughters, and lives in Ballston Spa, N.Y.



Scott Mayo
Class of 1980

Scott Mayo, a 1980 Rush-Henrietta graduate, is a gifted saxophonist, flutist, singer, composer, and Grammy-nominated musician and producer. A fixture in the Los Angeles music scene, Scott is a multidimensional performer who has toured the world. Reviews of his performances describe him as an

"immense talent" and "absolute master of the stage."

A Henrietta native, Scott worked at WRHR, the high school radio station, an experience he says prepped him for professional radio work. "Scott hosted Sunday afternoons on the air at WDKX Radio," recalls station staff member, Ella Dean. "WDKX has launched the careers of many, but Scott has accomplished things that most of us can only dream of. Even though Scott was on the radio as a DJ, everyone knew that his passion was performing. He is a master saxophone player!"

His passion and talent have made Scott a sought-after performer. He is perhaps best known for his work with Earth, Wind and Fire, having spent six years touring with the group playing saxophone and flute. He has worked with other legendary artists such as Stevie Wonder, Sergio Mendes, Luther Vandross, Steven Tyler, Cee-Lo Green, Michael Bolton, Bruce Springsteen, Carrie Underwood, Beyonce, Tim McGraw, Queen Latifah and Jennifer Hudson.

In 2003, Scott released his instrumental debut album, *Low Angle View*, which showcases his talent as a performer. His second album, *Testimony*, was released this summer and is his first all-vocal project. It is available on iTunes, Amazon and CDBaby.

No stranger to television, Scott has performed on "The Voice," "American Idol," "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "The Emmy Awards," and "The Singing Bee." At the 2011 Grammy Awards, he shared the stage with Mick Jagger and Raphael Saadiq during the tribute to the late "King of Rock n' Soul," Solomon Burke. During the 2011 BET Awards, Scott was the featured saxophone soloist honoring the late Clarence Clemons of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band.

Scott's work has also reached the big screen. He can be heard on the soundtracks for two animated films, *Happy Feet Two* in 2011 and *Epic* in 2013.

He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Jennifer, and has a 21-year old son, Michael, who is a senior at the New England Conservatory of Music.

Rush-Henrietta **Rush-Henrietta Central School District**

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Published by the Office of Community Relations

Did You Know?

- **Rush-Henrietta buses travel more than 1.4 million miles each year to transport our students.**
- **Our Food Services department prepares and serves more than 3,900 meals each day.**
- **Students check out more than 21,000 books each month from our school libraries.**
- **Our school nurses respond to more than 3,500 student office visits each month.**
- **Nearly two-dozen community groups use district buildings and grounds – for more than 13,300 hours – each year.**
- **Each day, our custodians and cleaners clean more than 1.1 million square feet, the equivalent of nearly 600 homes that are each 2,000 square feet.**
- **The Rush-Henrietta Central School District is grateful for your continued support!**