Dear Residents:
Welcome to another exciting school year!
We launched the 2017-18 school year with great fanfare and a wonderful first day of school for all our students. September was a month filled with exciting events including Dads Take Your Child to School Day, featuring fathers in our classrooms and a reception of significant men, including our firefighters and police officers, greeting families as they entered our schools.

This year, we are proud to note that we have kicked off a new district-wide branding initiative, introducing a new look to our District logo and our school mascot, the Falcon. Thanks to the hard work of our communications team and to District parent Miguel Berrios, a graphic designer, we have standardized the use of our District logo and of our Falcon. We also introduced Perry, a younger Peregrine Falcon, for use at our elementary schools. Welcome, Perry!

In addition, all our print materials, including stationery, business cards and envelopes, have been updated. And coming soon: Our Warburg campus will be decorated with pole banners that proudly announce that you have entered the Greenburgh Central School District grounds.

Continued on page 2

A Word from the Board of Education

Dear Neighbors,
We hope you enjoyed your summer. We appreciate your support as we continue on our journey toward becoming a World Class school district.

Together with Superintendent Chase, the Board of Education held its summer retreat, where we explored our options in seeking funding for Universal Pre-K, reviewed our board committees, and evaluated ourselves and our progress in achieving our goals for last year. In the context of our strategic plan, we have now adopted new goals for the 2017-18 school year. Here are a few key accomplishments so far this year:

• We have modified the Highview parking lot to increase student safety by separating the bus lane from the parent drop-off lane.
• We have received approval from NYSED to renovate the small gym at Woodlands and the gym at Highview, and are scheduled to begin the renovation process by winter break.
• We now have enough Chromebooks and IPads to provide a device for every district student in grades 2 through 12. We are in the process of obtaining equipment to support WIFI for all these devices so that we can fully deploy them.
• We have opened innovation rooms at RJ Bailey and Woodlands, are opening an innovation room for Highview in the Spring, and are planning classroom-by-classroom enhancements for ECP and LF Jackson.
• We have encouraged parental and community participation in our schools through several well-attended events including the Eclipse Viewing party, several Back to School events, Dad’s Take Your Child to School Day, and the Halloween Parade and Harvest March.
• We have completed our external audit for the 2016-17 school year, and updated our 5-year financial projection.
• We have completed an application for the Bloomberg Mayor’s Challenge in conjunction with the Town of Greenburgh to further enhance our STEAM offerings. If we win the challenge, the grant will provide our students with increased hands-on experience in solving real world technological problems and up to a year of no cost college credit.

Our staff is continuing to receive training in Universal Design for Learning, and we are preparing for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program rollout next year. We will continue to work together to promote academic success for our students throughout the school year.

Sincerely,
David Warner
President, Greenburgh CSD Board of Education
Late last year, we received the exciting news that our application to designate Woodlands High School as an International Baccalaureate school has been approved. We are now working diligently, partnering with IB schools in Dobbs Ferry, Clarkstown and Port Chester, to develop the curriculum necessary to meet the criteria for an IB diploma school designation. We have also received training at Southern Westchester BOCES to continue our work in this exciting direction. We look forward to becoming a full K-12 IB district within the next few years.

IB is a framework for teaching and learning that is founded on student inquiry, internationalism and building character. Teachers work collaboratively to develop standards-based units that are interdisciplinary and child-centered. The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

If your child has been coming home speaking a new language, chances are it's Mandarin. Our new Mandarin language program has been enthusiastically welcomed by parents and students alike, and the new language has been introduced in classrooms at RJ Bailey, Highview and Lee F. Jackson, giving our youngest students another choice. Mandarin Chinese continues to be an option for secondary students. Under the guidance of our new World Languages, ENL and IB Director Brendan Gallivan, we have hired four new Mandarin teachers who are inspiring our students to spread their wings and embrace the language. You can read more about the program, our new Mandarin teachers, and Mr. Gallivan in this newsletter.

Greenburgh has opened two new Innovation Labs – at RJ Bailey and Woodlands – and we plan to open a third lab at Highview in the spring. These large maker spaces are wide open classrooms that encourage hands-on learning in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. They are equipped with robots, Legos, 3-D printers and other devices that excite our students. We have coupled that with robust STEAM initiatives throughout the school year, including the STEAM Career Fair at RJ Bailey, the Regeneron Volunteer Day a visit to Manhattan College by a group of our Middle School girls, and other initiatives. You'll read more about those programs in this newsletter.

Finally, we are proud to welcome a large number of new families – close to 300! -- to our school district this year. We formally welcomed them Nov. 15 at a New Families event held at the Woodlands Little Theatre, and we intend to nurture our new students as they navigate and enjoy the Greenburgh schools.

To this end, I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and healthy holiday season. If your time will allow, please visit our multiple winter concerts and events that showcase the talents of our students. They never cease to amaze me!

Please follow us on Twitter and Instagram, like us on Facebook and download our mobile app to receive up-to-date information about our school district.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,
Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase
Superintendent of Schools
Our Children. Our Focus. Our Future.
Mandarin Program Embraced by Students

Ni hao!
That’s Chinese for “hello.” But you don’t have to tell Greenburgh’s elementary school students about ni hao. They already know how to greet one another and their new Mandarin teachers.

As part of an expanding World Cultures program in the school district, the Lee F. Jackson, RJ Bailey and Highview schools have all introduced Mandarin language classes this year, and even the District’s young kindergartners and first-graders are embracing the language with excitement.

And the excitement about Mandarin isn’t just for students. “The instruction,” said World Language, IB and ENL Director Brendan Gallivan, “takes place across the buildings and our classroom teachers are even learning Mandarin along with their students.”

At Lee F. Jackson, students take Mandarin as a “special” class and their primary teachers learn the language from teacher Su Liu at the same time as their students.

“The children work hard to learn the language,” said Mr. Gallivan, “but the work is joyful.”

To appeal to students, especially younger students, the District’s three Mandarin teachers – Su Liu at Jackson, Kunye Li at Highview and Ran Xiang at Bailey – use online lessons, songs and YouTube language videos to make learning fun and easier to digest.

At Jackson, said Ms. Liu, the curriculum “is content-based with themes and topics that are addressed one at a time. For example -- my family, my friends, my schools.”

At the same time, language class is multi-disciplinary with students learning shapes and numbers in Mandarin, and using manipulatives, art and music to expand their knowledge of the language. At a recent IB Sharing Assembly at Jackson, for example, students sang a song in Mandarin for their visiting parents.

“By the end of the school year,” said Ms. Liu, “students will know the basic daily expressions used in Mandarin.”

At Bailey, Mr. Xiang uses the same techniques with his older students but the work moves at a faster pace. Bailey students were placed this year in Spanish language and Mandarin language classes during the first quarter, and will get a choice of language classes in the third quarter of the year.

“We learn oralcy and literacy in Mandarin,” said Mr. Xiang, “and though it may sound impossible, we can actually do it.”

At Bailey, older students practice the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and explore the culture of China -- one of the world’s oldest continuous civilizations.

Unlike traditional grammar-based instruction, Mr. Xiang said, it’s important that a new Mandarin course be student-centered, teacher-directed, practice-intensified, and project-based. And because he’s dealing with fidgety pre-teens, Mr. Xiang also uses Chinese popcorn to reward students who provide the correct answers and are engaged in class.

Reciting and repeating Mandarin words is one thing, but writing in Mandarin is another skill students have acquired. In Ms. Liu’s class at Jackson, students recently made Chinese characters out of Play-Doh, shaping the dough into the lines of the complex Mandarin characters.

Students also learned about the Chinese Moon Festival, and celebrated by learning songs, making decorations, and other activities. The Moon Festival is the second grandest festival in China after the Chinese New Year and celebrates the moon, which is at its roundest and brightest during mid-Autumn. Families eat moon cakes and spend time with their families.

“As a world languages district,” said Mr. Gallivan, “it’s so important for our students to not only embrace the language, but to also understand the context, which means the culture. We are one world, rich in similarities and differences, and that’s what our teachers are trying to impart to our students.”
The Greenburgh Central School District has opened two new Innovation Labs – one at Woodlands Middle/High School and another at RJ Bailey – introducing hands-on open "maker spaces" that encourage STEAM activities and learning.

On hand for the fall ribbon-cutting ceremonies were District officials and school administrators, along with students interested in science, engineering, technology and other related pursuits. The Innovation Labs provide opportunities for students to take their learning deeper and encourages tinkering, play and open-ended exploration. The spaces, divided into work stations, include 3-D printers, building and engineering materials, tinkering materials, robot, and computers.

At RJ Bailey, fourth through sixth graders are using computer apps to make and edit their own movies, and they have a green screen for making videos. Teachers take students to the Innovation Room during class and the students can spend time there during lunch breaks and before and after school.

A new Innovation Lab is set to open at the Highview Elementary School in the spring, and the District is discussing future Innovation Labs in its remaining school buildings.

The opening of the Innovation Labs were just two examples of a busy STEAM season in Greenburgh. On Oct. 27, students at RJ Bailey and Lee F. Jackson enjoyed visits from Regeneron volunteers, who helped them to build houses out of a variety of materials, test how strong they could be, and toured the BioBus to look into microscopes and learn about tiny creatures.

On Oct. 25, RJ Bailey students learned more about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) activities.

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Greenburgh Holds Dads Take Your Child to School Day

One of Greenburgh Central School District’s most meaningful and emotional days of the year took place Sept. 19 with the mass arrival of fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other significant men in the lives of our students as part of Dads Take Your Child to School Day. At most of Greenburgh’s elementary schools, father figures, police officers, firemen and others turned out in droves to cheer on arriving fathers and their children, and to support those children whose significant males could not make the event. Even RJ Bailey Principal Kiana Washington, with a huge turnout, joined the procession into the school building with her own father. The Take Your Child to School event was followed by a Dads and Donuts session at the Warburg Mansion, where Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase and Board of Education President David Warner spoke to fathers about the District’s 2017-18 initiatives, and where Patrick Auguste, a curriculum consultant and expert, addressed the fathers about fostering literacy in their homes.

Greenburgh Schools Celebrate Halloween

On Oct. 31, students, staff and administrators dressed in their finest as Greenburgh’s schools held a variety of Halloween parades. Many of our teachers dressed in themed costumes, and superheroes were definitely this year’s most popular costumes among our students. It was a perfect sunny and crisp day for the parades, which were all visited by our Woodlands High School band, playing tunes like “Thriller” and “Ghostbusters.”
Greenburgh Central School District
Hires Two Administrators to Key Roles

The Greenburgh Central School District hired two key administrators for the 2017-18 school year – Director of World Language, ENL and IB Brendan Gallivan and Director of Technology/Chief Information Officer Carlos Ramirez, both tasked with important initiatives that will propel Greenburgh forward as it tackles Mandarin, International Baccalaureate status, and new technology improvements.

Brendan Gallivan Joins Greenburgh as Director of World Languages, ENL and IB

Brendan Gallivan, Greenburgh’s new Director of World Languages, International Baccalaureate Programs and English as a New Language Programs, is excited about taking on a role that until now, didn’t exist in the District.

“What attracted me was the newness of the position,” said Gallivan, a 10-year school administrator.

The notion of teaching our students to become global citizens – a large part of Mr. Gallivan’s role -- is relatively new in U.S. public education. The option of International Baccalaureate degrees and courses, and the introduction of additional language programs was not a priority in most U.S. public schools until the last decade or so.

In fact, noted Mr. Gallivan, 66 percent of people living in the world’s other countries speak more than one language. In the U.S., only 17 percent of our citizens speak two languages or more.

In Greenburgh, the wider world view will fall under Mr. Gallivan’s responsibilities with a three-pronged approach – a K-12 world language curriculum, expanding the IB program district-wide, and reaching out to ENL students, not only with basic English skills but by engaging them in curriculum.

This year, Greenburgh is offering students at RJ Bailey a choice between taking Spanish or Mandarin as their second language. That program, and those choices, will grow, said Mr. Gallivan.

In addition, Greenburgh is expanding its IB program, which until now, had been offered at the elementary schools and at Woodlands Middle School. But in the coming year, the District will be working toward giving its High School students the choice of graduating with a true IB diploma, an international standard that carries weight with colleges and universities in the U.S. and around the world.

In an IB program, students take a standard set of courses and corresponding assessments in a rigorous two-year program, which they complete during junior and senior year. Other requirements include community service and a research paper. The IB program generally takes a more holistic approach to studies than Advanced Placement classes do.

If students do not want to commit to the full diploma program, they can pick and choose which IB courses they’d like to take, just like with AP classes.

“We’re growing global citizens, in Greenburgh and elsewhere, and we aspire to be a really great IB district,” said Mr. Gallivan, whose own daughter graduated from high school with an IB diploma.

In reaching Greenburgh’s English as a New Language students, said

Carlos Ramirez Joins Greenburgh as Director of Technology/Chief Information Officer

Carlos Ramirez, a technology specialist with experience at the state and local levels, joined the Greenburgh Central School District over the summer as its Director of Technology and Chief Information Officer.

Mr. Ramirez, who most recently worked as Manager for the Smart Schools Bond/Account Manager at the Lower Hudson Regional Information Center (LHRIC), has years of experience in the field of public education technology, including a year with the New York State Education Department.

One of his first tasks after joining Greenburgh was to submit a Smart School Bond application with the state on behalf of the district, which he hopes will be approved by January 2018. If the district’s application is approved, he said, Greenburgh could see funding for improvements in the District’s technology infrastructure, broadband speed, and a new unified security system district-wide.

He is also working on moving the District closer to one-to-one computing, and helped the District purchase 460 additional Chromebooks for students in September. The District is nearing its goal of being 100 percent one-to-one, he said, and expects to purchase additional laptops for Woodlands High School by January.

“My job is to facilitate the goal of being a true one-to-one District,” said Mr. Ramirez, “and we are very close to meeting that goal.”

Mr. Ramirez also is working on providing valuable data to the District’s teachers and administrators to assist them in teaching and in reaching all kinds of learners.

“Everything we do goes back to informing our leaders and creating a data culture in our schools,” he said. “The moment we embrace data is the moment that the magic happens. Our teachers and administrators need to be empowered by data to move our students forward and help them to become college and career ready.”

While at the LHRIC, Mr. Ramirez provided assistance to school districts preparing to submit plans to New York State related to the Smart School Bond Act, which provides technology-related funding to districts. Approved by New York State voters in 2014, the Act authorized the issuance of $2 billion of general obligation bonds to finance improved educational technology and infrastructure to school throughout the state.

Before working for the LHRIC, Mr. Ramirez served for just over a year as Coordinator of Technology Policy for NYSED, where he advised leadership on best practices in technology integration, helped to coordinate funding tied to technology, assisted in implementing a

Continued on page 8
Greenburgh staff and students performed a number of charitable deeds this fall, including a march to raise money for breast cancer research and a collection of goods desperately needed by the victims of the hurricane in Puerto Rico. A hardy group of students and staff descended on the Manhattanville College grounds in October for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk for the American Cancer Society. The Greenburgh group raised money online and through friends and family donations, and presented a check to the ACS.

In addition, the Woodlands High School Key Club, along with other students and staff, collected a room full of donations for the Puerto Rico victims of Hurricane Maria. Front office staff member Damaris Lugo collected the donations.

Paying it Forward: Good Deeds in Greenburgh

Art Gallery Opens with Fanfare at Town Hall

Our students love art, and the District celebrates their work at two key art gallery openings each year – one at Town Hall in the spring and the other at the Warburg Mansion in the fall.

The Mansion art gallery opened on Sept. 27 this year, with refreshments and music provided by the Woodlands High School jazz band. Some of our student artists, representing all grade levels and schools, stopped by with their families to view the exhibit.

Kudos to our art teachers -- Dawn Weiss, Tara Peters, Claire Cronin, Bracken Feldman, Mary Frances Perkins, and Constantine Andreadis, now retired, along with our arts consultant Miriam Bernabei. Welcome to our new art teachers -- Anna Predovan and Jacqueline Newbey -- as well!
Our Children. Our Focus. Our Future.

In Step with Engineering: Woodlands Middle School Girls Get Into the Water to Study the Hudson River Estuary

Woodlands Middle School girls spent the day Oct. 13 learning about the Hudson River Estuary/Tibbetts Brook, with assistance from Manhattan College in the Bronx. The WMS students joined up with five Manhattan College professors in a lab at the college’s Leo Engineering Building, where they spent time doing experiments centered around the science of environmental engineering and learning more about the profession and about environmental projects currently ongoing throughout the city.

At the nearby Van Cortlandt Park, the students donned waders, grabbed fishing nets, and joined up with engineers at Tibbetts Brook, where they learned close-up about the Hudson River Estuary system, and about the organisms living in the system. With the assistance of technology, the students also found water probes that were installed around the estuary two weeks earlier, and could be connected to computers via bluetooth.

Kerryanne Donohue, a visiting instructor at Manhattan College, led much of the lab discussion and activities with the WMS students. Ms. Donohue worked for 12 years as a hydraulic engineer for the US Army Corps of Engineers on flood control and storm damage reduction projects, and wetland restoration. Dr. Jessica Wilson, an assistant professor in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, also assisted.

The project aims to use technology to help students learn about the Hudson River Estuary and is titled “Connecting Middle/High School and College Students to Their Estuary: Pairing Smart Devices to Recorded Estuary Parameters.” It has been funded in part by a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund through the Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Manhattan College School of Engineering. The American Association of University Women and the non-profit Friends of Van Cortlandt Park were collaborative sponsors of the project on behalf of Greenburgh. An Estuary Wide event called “NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Day in the Life of an Estuary” took place at the same site on Oct 12.

The grant covers the cost of the instruments used by the students and the assistance of a graduate student. Professors at Manhattan College donate their time to the project. The Manhattan College School of Engineering provided a pizza lunch for the girls.

Greenburgh Wins Social Media Award

Greenburgh Central School District is pleased to announce that it has won an Award of Honor for its social media initiatives from the New York School Public Relations Association.

The public relations team, led by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tahira A. DuPree Chase, was recognized for its novel and frequent use of a number of social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and a mobile app created by its staff, to communicate with stakeholders.

Members of the Greenburgh communications team include Evelyn McCormack of Mack Digital Communications, Steven Lewis, Educational Television Studio Supervisor, and Laser Alert, Districtwide Network Administrator and GCSD Mobile App Developer.

Greenburgh was among approximately 140 winners in the 38th annual statewide communications contest. More than 430 entries were received by judges.

NYSPRA’s Awards Luncheon was held at the New York State School Boards Association convention in Lake Placid, NY, where the Greenburgh award was presented to Ms. McCormack and Board of Education members David Warner, Claudia Glaser and Lloyd Newland.

Ms. McCormack was also honored at the luncheon for being named 2017 New York State Communicator of the Year.

Nominated by a colleague from the Lakeland School District, Ms. McCormack was presented with a plaque at the NYSSBA convention and spoke about schools and storytelling. She has been involved in school communications for the past 23 years and was an 18-year daily newspaper editor and reporter.
Brendan Gallivan...

Continued from page 5

Mr. Gallivan, the goal is to immerse those students not only in learning English but getting them up to speed in the curriculum and helping them to successfully navigate through classes from kindergarten through graduation.

“It’s about equity and access for our ENL and all our students,” he said.

Mr. Gallivan served for four years as Director of World Languages in the Rochester City School District, an urban district with a large population of refugees. There, students spoke 80 different languages.

“We have been demanding the hard skills from our students, like technology and the sciences,” he said. “And these are necessities. But more and more, the world and the job market are asking for adaptable skills, acculturation and those who can speak multiple languages. They’re looking for students who can adapt and understand others from different perspectives.”

Carlos Ramirez...

Continued from page 5

statewide learning technology plan aligned to the Regents Reform Agenda, and supported statewide virtual learning initiatives.

Mr. Ramirez also served for almost three years as director of technology and chief information officer for the Hempstead Public Schools in Hempstead, L.I., and as instructional technology coordinator for the Mount Vernon City School District for eight years.

Just over the summer, Mr. Ramirez also was named Advocate of the Year by the New York State Association of School Business Officials (NYASBO). He received the honor at the organization’s 69th Annual Education Summit & Expo in Lake Placid in early June. The award recognizes a deep and lasting commitment to advocating on behalf of public schools and an understanding and appreciation of school fiscal issues.

Mr. Ramirez earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in internet business systems from Mercy College, a master's in educational leadership from the College of Saint Rose, and is working on his dissertation to earn a Ph.D. in educational leadership and administration from Concordia College of Chicago.

He is married to Betty, an accountant who runs the couple’s home-based accounting practice, and they have one son, Ryan, a sophomore at SUNY Purchase.