

### MESSAGE from the Superintendent

Dear Community Members,

It's hard to believe that a third of the school year is already over! I'm excited to report that we are making great strides in creating an exceptional learning environment for our students, and by "we," I mean staff, students, families and community stakeholders.

Our school district is making bold commitments to our learners, beginning with changing our understanding of how students learn best. As a result, we have shifted our notion of teachers from knowledge deliverers to cultivators of essential skills and literacies.

To support these shifts, we're building modern learning environments. It's easy to see how our redesigned classrooms look and work differently. What is less obvious—and most important—is our dedication to increasing the passion that each child brings to his or her program of study.

We're encouraging authentic, problem-based learning for students at all grade levels, along with healthy amounts of play and social activity both during the school day and beyond through K-12 extracurricular and co-curricular programs. Students are also empowered to become responsible members of their school communities, as well as our global community, through character education programming and service activities.

Join me at one of our many athletic events, holiday concerts or Family Nights to see how we're growing. Dates are posted at [socsd.org](http://socsd.org). Thank you for your continued support and best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

*Robert Pritchard*

**Robert R. Pritchard, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

## SOCSD Opens K-12 Family Engagement Center



School Social Workers **Jessenia Cursio** and **Jessica Inglis**, Speech Therapist **Lori Graham** and South Orangetown Middle School Peer Leaders engaged young participants at the November 7 Pre-K Playgroup, giving parents and grandparents time to talk.

On October 18, the South Orangetown Central School District opened its new K-12 Family Engagement Center (FEC) in a dedicated space—Room 308—at South Orangetown Middle School. The launch was the culmination of nearly a year of discussions about bringing separate initiatives which support parent involvement under one roof and creating programming to serve families from preschool through high school graduation.

"It's a place where all families can feel supported, learn together and build a sense of community for our entire district," says Interim Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services **Dr. Karen Tesik**, who oversees the FEC. SOCSD looks forward to welcoming an FEC Coordinator shortly.

All FEC programs and services are provided at no cost to families. Click on "Family Engagement Center" under Quick Links at [socsd.org](http://socsd.org) for more information.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

- **November 26, 7:00pm in the SOMS Library | Parent Book Discussion** about "The Talent Code" by Daniel Coyle. Copies are available to borrow.
- **December 2, Noon-7:00pm in the Village of Piermont | Piermont Chamber of Commerce Holiday Festival Benefiting the FEC!** Support local businesses while celebrating the holiday season at this family-friendly event. Participating businesses are donating a portion of sales for FEC programming.
- **December 5, 9:30am & 10:30am in the FEC | Pre-K Playgroup** is a great opportunity for South Orangetown families with children ages 2-4 to meet!
- **January 2, 9:30am & 10:30am in the FEC | Pre-K Playgroup**
- **February 6, 9:30am & 10:30am in the FEC | Pre-K Playgroup**
- **Ongoing | Growth Mindset for Parents Online Course** available at [mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents](http://mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents).



## Alumnus Talks Sports Marketing at TZHS

Before he was one of *SportsBusiness Journal* / *SportsBusiness Daily's* 50 Most Influential People in Sports Business, **Howard Nuchow** was a student and varsity athlete at Tappan Zee High School ('88). On October 5, Mr. Nuchow returned to his alma mater to share his experience as the Co-Head of CAA Sports, named by *Forbes* as the world's most valuable sports agency for the sixth consecutive year, with **Mark Bergling's** marketing students.

Mr. Nuchow credits growing up in South Orangetown for much of his success. "I've traveled all over the world, and nothing has prepared me as much as what I gained from growing up here. We learned in high school who might be disloyal. Those same instincts that help you survive here will help you," he advised. "When you're coming up, nothing is more important than character and that starts right here. I've been betting on character my whole life. Surround yourself with good, honest and honorable people...people who are navigating the world in a way you can be proud of."

*"To have someone at Howie's level in the industry, with his reputation, spend time sharing his experience with students is incredible," said Mr. Bergling. "I'm thrilled."*

Over the course of his conversation with students and Mr. Bergling, Mr. Nuchow reflected on his career and offered advice:

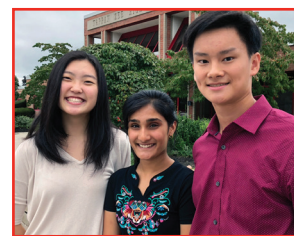
- "Find your strength and excel in it. Be great at something."
- "Find champions for your career. If you find someone who cares about you, treat them like gold and never let them down. Start practicing that by building relationships with teachers here."
- "How you conduct yourself on social media matters. It reflects character. We always look and we go back as far as we can. Present yourself there as you would want CAA's HR to see you."

## Mentors MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**Do you have professional expertise you'd like to share as a guest speaker or mentor volunteer?** Please contact our school principals to discuss opportunities.

## We Achieve

■ TZHS seniors **Kevin Huang, Palak Oza and Yena Shin** (pictured, right) were named 2019 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists. **Brian Curtis** and **Logan Tabor** earned Letters of Commendation.



■ The following TZHS musicians earned New York State School Music Association Area All-State, All-State (\*) and National Association for Music Education All-National (+) honors:

**BAND** | **Carter Chung, Estelle Lee\*, Yena Shin\* & Logan Tabor**

**CHORUS** | **Cassandra Bartels+, Sarah Mesibov, Allison Reda, Erin Sullivan\* (alternate), Seo Yoon Yang & Rebecca Zachariah**

**ORCHESTRA** | **Henry Huang, Kevin Huang\*, Lois Kim, Palak Oza\*, Mia Pakola & Lindsay Zohar**



■ Twenty TZHS and 14 SOMS students earned 2018 Rockland Community College Hispanic Heritage Student Achievement Awards. They are:

Grade 8 (pictured, left): **Steven A., Gabriela D., Bryan E., Christopher G., Nico G., Diego G., Carlos G., Zuliana L., Cristian L., Kyra R., Brayan R., Vivian R., Christopher V. & Robert V.**

Grade 10: **Ryan A., Mia C., Milagro de los Angeles G., Simryn M., Kyaris R. & Michael V.**

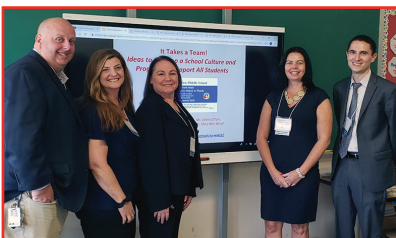
Grade 12: **Justin A., Ashley C., Lyla F., Anthony G., Stephanie L., Rigoberto M., Jacqueline M., Jessica M., Danielle P., Diana P., Allison R., Carlyssa R., Daysi V. & Kaylee V.**

■ October Students of the Month: TZHS senior **Nicole Gontaryk** (South Orangetown Rotary Club), TZHS seniors **Caitlin Cronin** and **Toniann Talone** and SOMS eighth-graders **Gianna C.** and **Sofia D.** (Rockland Sons of Italy Lodge 2176)

■ League Champs: **Boys Varsity Soccer, Girls Varsity Soccer and Girls Tennis**

■ County Champs: **Girls JV Soccer** (pictured, right)

■ Individual athletic accomplishments: **Kelly Harris** was a *Lohud Sports* Girls Soccer Player of the Week; Girls Varsity Cross Country and Track & Field athlete **Tori Fears** was a *Rockland Journal News* Scholar-Athlete; **Tara Harris** was selected for the All Section 1 Girls Soccer Team; and, **Marisa Medina** placed 1st in 3 events in the Girls Swimming League Championship.



■ SOMS Interim Principal **Dr. Chad Corey**, School Support/Dean **Michael Ryan** and teachers **Debra DiTuri, Christa Loughran-Mellozzo** and **Mary Ann Wood** presented on building learning structures and tools to support the development of a respectful and developmentally-responsive school culture at the 38th Annual New York State Middle School Association Conference on October 19.

■ CLE Technology Teacher and long-time outdoor education advocate **Jacob Tanenbaum** received the Keep Rockland Beautiful 2018 Education Award on November 2.

■ Interim Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services **Dr. Karen Tesik** will be honored by JCC Rockland for social justice leadership on December 2.

■ All four schools were recognized with USDA Bronze Healthier US School Challenge Smarter Lunchrooms awards for working to provide students with quality, nutritious food and physical education.

■ CLE Fifth-Grade Teacher **Kottie Christie-Blick** and Technology Teacher **Jacob Tanenbaum** led a workshop, "Using Models to Understand Climate Change," at the 47th Annual North American Association for Environmental Education Conference in Spokane, WA in October.

■ SOCSO won a total of six 2018 New York State School Public Relations Association and National School Public Relations Association awards for video production and the SOCSO Update community newsletter.



# SOCSD SNAPSHOTS

"We are constantly looking for **new ways to innovate which enhance student success and our school culture**," says Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Pritchard. Here are just a few examples of exciting new learning experiences in our schools:



**Beth Apicella and Kerry Cassetti's** second-graders recently learned about plants, planting and sustainability by observing pumpkin and squash sprouts in **William O. Schaefer Elementary School's** new outdoor classroom! Over the summer, our Facilities Department completed construction and installed furniture purchased through a Spring 2017 \$25,000 donation made by **SOCES PTA**. Classes now have a dedicated space for students to observe, explore, listen and learn hands-on across all content areas.



**Cottage Lane Elementary School** students in three third-grade classes have become virtual classmates with students at The American School of Barcelona, as part of a 10-week program. Students are exploring cultural and curricular topics together through video exchanges, written messages and live chat sessions via Padlet, a collaboration app. As the program progresses, CLE students and their ASB partners will share a problem they see in their community, brainstorm solutions and, ultimately, co-present their project via Skype. Above, students watch a video message sent by their ASB partner with teacher **Claire Eckert**.



**South Orangetown Middle School** Technology Teacher **Louis Chugranis** and members of the SOMS Gardening Club relocated plantings to the school's brand-new greenhouse last month. Administrators and teachers are developing opportunities to utilize this new resource to expand outdoor learning opportunities for students.



**Chalet Suisse Home Improvement** owner **Danny Roggensinger** (TZHS '05) fielded questions from students in the new Alternative Fuels course at Tappan Zee High School on November 5. His visit was part of a unit developed by Alternative Fuels teacher **Jim Keelty** and Gr. 6-12 Instructional Math Coach **Marisa Premus** which challenges students to design and build scale models of energy efficient, off-the-grid homes with guidance from local experts.



This year, SOCSD rolled out its **GIVE THE BUS A CHANCE** campaign to help our K-8 students get to and from school safely. Not only are school buses the safest mode of transportation for students, but reducing parent drop-offs and pickups enable our schools to maximize instructional time and reduce busing delays. Early results are promising: 45 more students are riding our buses daily this fall compared to last year! Parents, please **Give the Bus a Chance**.

# Picture THIS

**17** SOCS D classrooms were outfitted with new technology and furniture this summer. One-size-fits-all desks were replaced with adjustable tables and seating which allow students to move freely from large group to small group to independent work.



## Classroom Redesigns Underway

Teachers across our district have been restructuring how they teach in order to provide students with real world, problem-based educational experiences that build important skills, including critical thinking, communication, creativity and teamwork. To support this work, SOCS D has invested in renovating learning spaces to be more responsive and student-centered.

"We're so excited to be creating contemporary learning environments where our students and teachers have access to what they need when they need it and the flexibility to learn and teach in a variety of settings," said Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction **Dr. Brian Culot**.

### Key features of redesigned classrooms:

- Chairs that are safe for elementary school students to sit in, frontwards or backwards
- Rocking seats and stackable rolling seats for students who focus better when they're able to move while seated
- Couch-like seating that allows high school students to work comfortably on their own
- Tables with adjustable legs allow the students to see the teacher (and vice versa), no matter where they're seated in the room
- Tables with erasable surfaces make brainstorming and collaboration visual and physical
- Enhanced storage that reduces clutter
- New wall-mounted monitors and workboards throughout the classroom allow instruction to happen anywhere

## Join Us: Winter Concerts

Our Music Department is busy preparing student musicians for winter concerts at South Orangetown Middle School and Tappan Zee High School. Families and community members are invited to attend these free performances!

### SOMS Winter Concert I

December 11 @ 7pm  
SOMS Auditorium

### SOMS Winter Concert II

December 12 @ 7pm  
SOMS Auditorium

### TZHS Winter Concert

December 19 @ 7pm  
TZHS Auditorium

## ❄️ Get Ready for Winter! ❄️

Notifications for closings, delays and early dismissals are sent to staff and families via SchoolMessenger phone and email messages. They are also posted on the District homepage, Facebook and Twitter feeds and announced by local media outlets.

Please be sure that your children's schools have up-to-date emergency contact phone numbers and email information on file **and** have a family emergency plan in place in the event that school is delayed, canceled or dismissed early.



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