

# RIDER REPORT

## SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

Happy New Year and welcome to our first edition of "The Rider Report."

Connecting with families has always been a priority however more so today as we navigate one of the most challenging times in recent memory.

Last fall, the Board of Education and I met to review District goals within the landscape of our current circumstances. From those workshops, several priorities were identified including the continued safe operation of schools; ensuring a quality and equitable remote experience; supporting social emotional learning; and providing mental health support for all.

We are ever mindful of the well-being of all members of the school community and are keeping a focus on mental health while balancing our attention on supporting students academically and ensuring a successful remote learning experience. The results gathered from the District survey have been invaluable in informing next steps in each priority area (see our article, "Survey Results Guide Planning" on the next page).

Finally, as we begin this New Year, I wish to express my gratitude for all of you – students, parents, teachers and staff – who have shown such kindness and dedication to each other.

Through everything we have encountered this past year, there is still so much to celebrate and be proud of as an ICC Rider. I look forward to keeping lines of communication open and continuing to work together as we navigate the second half of the 2020-2021 school year.



Mrs. Guntlow

## One , many branches

Whether they're known as Giving Trees or Angel Trees, for more than a decade, each district school has come up with a way to help meet the needs of students during the holidays and throughout the year. This year the schools were overwhelmed by the community's generosity, and successfully collected hundreds of gifts for 130 students.

"We always worry about there being enough," said Courtney Dobkins, who, along with Robin Sullivan and Meredith Grizzaffi, help spearhead the High School's Giving Tree efforts. "This year, since we had to start later and without our usual fundraising, we were even more concerned."

Sullivan, who organizes a year-round pantry program at the high school, said she's also seen the numbers of students with food insecurity escalate, as a result of the pandemic.

"We are so happy to be able to spoil them this year," said Dobkins, noting that organizers made quick work of some lengthy wish lists.

Jackie Purificato is a sixth grade special education teacher who has helped organize the Middle School's annual holiday gift drive since 2016. She says students typically select gifts they wish to give from a tree in the lobby.

Because of Covid precautions, Purificato said, the Middle School wish list went directly online. An Amazon gift registry made the process simple and easy but she worried that some of the holiday spirit might be lost.

"We thought we might have to bypass the kids selecting from the tree, but I have heard from kids that their parents included them in the selection, purchasing and wrapping."

Amy Stephenson, Primary counselor, said 50 students from 20 families benefitted



From the left, Courtney Dobkins, Robin Sullivan and Meredith Grizzaffi stand with gifts collected at the high school.



Jackie Purificato stands with some of the presents collected at the Middle School.



Amy Stephenson and Principal Andrea Williams receive a delivery of toys from CCSO.

from the Giving Tree this year, adding they also received help from local law enforcement agencies.

"The Columbia County Sheriff's Office was able to secure a donation of American Girl Dolls and soccer balls, to help augment Giving Tree gifts," she said.

"The State Police in Livingston reached out to me a few weeks ago and asked if I wanted to pick out some toys from their toy drive. I was able to drive down there last week and pick out a few things," said Stephenson.



## GRRREAT WORK

Our Primary School families and teachers came through for pets in need! Mrs. Funk and Amy Stephenson organized a pet supply donation collection during the month of December.

In two weeks, we gathered a ton of pet supplies for the animals at the Columbia Greene Humane Society.

They are overwhelmed with our support and generosity.



## ADULT LEARNERS

Local author, Jamie Cat Callan will host a creative writing course for adult learners via Zoom starting in January.

You'll learn about intuitive writing and participate in right brain writing exercises.

Check out our website in January for dates and times. Fee: \$15.



Mrs. Dolan works with high school students in remote classes.

# Survey Responses Guide Planning

### District surveys show confidence, areas for growth

In November, Ichabod Crane administered three surveys district wide and received responses from 895 parents, and approximately 53 percent of students in grade 4-12 ; as well as 78 percent of staff. The survey looked at four key areas aligned with the BOE priorities: Health and Safety, Academics, Equity in Technology and Social Emotional Well-Being.

Survey results were summarized in two Board of Education meetings in December, which can be found on the [BOE website](#).

Parents surveyed were overwhelmingly positive with respect to Health and Safety, with approximately 90 percent responding they felt well-informed and confident in the district's planning and implementation of around safety procedures.

Parents also showed a strong level of confidence when asked about how well their child has adjusted to this unique school year; the level of importance the school places on social emotional well-being; the quality of the counseling and other mental health resources provided to student and families to help with their social emotional needs. For additional information on the results, [click here](#).

Students and staff also reported a new-found comfort level with technology platforms to teach and learn remotely, and almost all reported they have the technology at home to access remote learning.

These are huge improvements from March when we were forced to shift to remote learning with no advanced warning.

However, while students overwhelmingly report a comfort level and ability to learn remotely, teacher and parent results indicate concerns in this area. As a result, we continue to focus on the level of engagement and thoroughness of the remote instruction for both fully remote and quarantined students. [See survey results here](#).

"Remote learning is new for students, teachers, and families and we are working hard to continually improve the experience for everyone. We are offering ongoing training for teachers, and in response to feedback from teachers and parents, continue to refine expectations and support for students," said Lucas Christensen, assistant superintendent of schools.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### JANUARY

January 8, ACT Exam registration deadline.

January 8, Pre-orders for the Jan. 22 D.C. Club's Brooks BBQ are due. e-mail [dcclub@ichabodcrane.org](mailto:dcclub@ichabodcrane.org) for more information.

January 12, Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m. Virtual Meeting.

January 14, Junior Honor Society Induction, 5:30 at the High School Auditorium.

January 18, No School in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

January 26-29, Regents Exams.

January 29, Second Quarter marking period ends.

### FEBRUARY

February 2, Board of Education meeting, 7 p.m. Location TBD.

February 8-19, Kindergarten Open Registration at the Primary School from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

[www.ichabodcrane.org](http://www.ichabodcrane.org)

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