

# HOME PAGES

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2018



## Children Learn that Global Citizenship Means Helping, Respecting, Protecting, Acting

Children's book author Aisha Saeed is inspired by bravery in young people, such as Malala Yousafzai, a 21-year-old Pakistani advocate for girls' and women's education who was shot at age 15 in retaliation for her activism.

The protagonist in Ms. Saeed's book "Amal Unbound" is a Pakistani girl who has to leave school to help out at home. She later becomes an indentured servant to pay off a family debt.

But she is freed when she exposes her owner's corruption and he is arrested.

"There's so much bravery that all of us have within us that we can do to change the world, whether it's in huge ways like Malala, who won a Nobel Peace Prize, or small ways just in our community," Ms. Saeed told students in a Nov. 6 visit to Pocantico for the 2018 Global Read Aloud.

"So my question for all of you is: What is something that you can do to help your local community to make the world a better place?" she asked.

The question gets to the heart of what the district is doing to encourage global citizenship. A year after implementing a world language program for all students, Pocantico is expanding the scope of its global citizenship initiative. The goals are to

**CITIZENSHIP continued on page 5**

## New Makerspace Classroom is Space Where Ideas and Collaboration Germinate

In one part of the Makerspace classroom, two girls quibbled over a marker. Three boys seated at a nearby table were annoyed because their pencil tips broke as they wrote. Another student looked frustrated because she couldn't log onto a computer.

The scenarios weren't real though. The fourth-graders were acting out scenes that their classmates were capturing with iPads.

The new Makerspace classroom opened in September. A Makerspace is a place where students use their creativity to explore, design, solve problems and invent. They collaborate on projects, brainstorm and learn skills they need to be successful in the 21st century.

Student Keira E.'s partner, Yatee L., snapped a photo of her trying to sign onto a computer. The fourth-grader then closed her eyes and put her hands on her head as Yatee

took another picture. The assignment was to tell a story in two photos.

"It's a little challenging," Yatee said.

The fourth-graders were learning about photography and using images to tell a story, part of the Jacob Burns Film Center's Image, Sound, and Story Curriculum.

**MAKERSPACE continued on page 6**



# Students Participate in Farm-to-Table Vegetable Harvest and Soup Festival

Five third-graders carefully carried their trophy out of the garden at the back of the school. It was a massive Italian zucchini bound for Chef Kassie Arcate's outdoor chopping table and ultimately enough vegetable soup to feed the entire student body and staff.

The children were picking vegetables for the Harvest Soup Festival, which took place Oct. 16 and 17. The annual event has been held for about 10 years.

On the brisk Tuesday, children picked carrots, beans, butternut squash, bell peppers, parsley, thyme and basil. They washed them in vats of cold water that chilled their hands. They carried them over to tables, where they peeled the carrots and squash and grated garlic. They followed directions from Chef Kassie and custodian and master gardener Jose Zamora, who tended the garden throughout the summer and fall.

Students, who planted the garden last year, also added the scraps to the compost bin.

Third-grader Shannon E. had never seen an Italian zucchini before this fall, but she eagerly volunteered to scoop out the seeds when Chef Kassie asked who wanted to get their hands "ooey gooey."

"It's so slimy. I like it," she said as she dropped handfuls into a bowl.

Parents and staff members chopped the vegetables. The school supplemented the herbs and vegetables from the garden with garlic, onions and celery root from the nearby Stone

Barns Center. As the soup began to cook, the strong smell of the onions and garlic wafted through the air.

As she peeled onion after onion, parent Onyinye Igbokwe said her children love the vegetable soup and the older ones complain that her own doesn't live up to it. This was her second year volunteering for the festival. Her kids are in fifth grade, first grade and pre-kindergarten.



"It's so great for kids to see a garden grow and then harvest it and eat the soup the next day," Ms. Igbokwe said. "The kids get very excited about it."



As each class went outside to help with harvesting, Adam Brown, director of curriculum and technology, spoke with students about saving and



replanting seeds. He asked them to pick and open up some dried out pole bean pods. He gave teachers seeds to use for class science experiments.

"That is the life of the next garden," he told one group of students. "These are the babies that we're going to plant."

The garden is used as the context for social studies, math, science and English language arts during the school year.

The following day, the whole school enjoyed the hearty vegetable soup, along with rolls, herb butter (made by seventh-graders in the Family and Consumer Sciences class) and pesto made from the carrot greens. Parents served the students in the cafeteria.

"They make it every year and it's probably the best lunch of the school year," said sixth-grader Cate W. as she sipped her soup.

Fellow sixth-grader Katie K. agreed. "We wish they did it a lot more," she said.

## Board of Education Goals, 2018-19

The school board adopted its goals for the school year on September 30. They are:

- Ensure Smooth Transition in District Leadership. Recruit, select and prepare a new superintendent of schools.
- Support Ongoing Student Growth and Achievement. Identify objective measures of success and establish systems for monitoring and reporting progress.
- Strengthen and Clarify Board Operating Protocols. Define board protocols and procedures, clarify roles and responsibilities.
- Enhance Community Engagement. Identify areas of opportunity and deliver clear strategies to further strengthen community engagement with the District.
- \*Finalize Capital Project Proposal. Determine the final project scope and funding sources, prepare for a community vote.

\* The board decided at its October 25 meeting to table the capital project until next summer.

# D.A.R.E. Curriculum Focuses on Making Sound Decisions and Healthy Choices

Suppose it is Halloween night and some of the friends you're trick-or-treating with decide to do something unsafe and illegal – like toilet paper someone's yard. What do you do?

The wise thing would be to break away and find a group that's going to celebrate Halloween safely and responsibly, Detective Lauren Valentino, a Mount Pleasant Police Department D.A.R.E. officer, recently told seventh- and eighth-graders.

"I would hate for you to make a bad choice and wind up with a serious consequence and not know that's what was going to happen," she said. "We're making you aware, educating you so that you can remind each other how to do it right."

While the lesson related to Halloween safety, it drew on the D.A.R.E. philosophy of teaching children to make good decisions and healthy choices when they encounter difficult or challenging situations.

D.A.R.E., which was founded 35 years ago, brings police officers into classrooms to teach children how to resist peer pressure and drugs and live violence-free lives. The acronym traditionally stood for Drug Abuse Resistance

Education, but it has been updated to Define, Assess, Respond and Evaluate.

The curriculum that Detective Valentino and Mount Pleasant Police Officer Dan Franco are teaching this year includes topics like leadership, bravery, risks and consequences, peer pressure, bullying and managing stress.



They will discuss alcohol, tobacco and vaping with older students.

The D.A.R.E. curriculum, which is for students in grades 5-8, corresponds with Pocantico's emphasis on teaching students the social and emotional skills they need to be successful in life, Principal Brent Harrington said. "D.A.R.E. has evolved to a curriculum more around positive decision-making and healthy choices," he said.

The school wants students to have opportunities to see the good work the police department is doing in promoting positive decision-making.

Superintendent Carol Conklin-Spillane said the district is excited about building its relationship with the department. "We look forward to the positive impact this next generation of D.A.R.E. instruction will have on our students," she said.

As Detective Valentino and Officer Franco worked their way through their Halloween safety presentation for all students, third- and fourth-graders eagerly raised their hands with burning questions and comments.

What if a dark house is part of the "trick" in "trick or treat?" one boy wanted to know.

How are you supposed to put a glow-in-the-dark pin on your costume if it's an inflatable one? a girl asked.

The D.A.R.E. officers were happy to answer all their questions. One of the program's goals is for children to get to know police officers and understand what they do. "If they were in trouble and needed help, we would want them to feel comfortable asking for it," Detective Valentino said.

## Theater Group Performs Anti-Bullying Musical during National Bullying Prevention Month

Members of the Random Farms Kids' Theater visited Pocantico on October 26 to perform "The New Kid." In the anti-bullying musical, a student transfers to a new school and encounters cliques, hazing, bullying and peer pressure. The Elmsford-based theater's actors, whose ages range from 10 to 15, performed for children in grades 2-6. October was National Bullying Prevention Month.



Scenes from "The New Kid," which a local theater group performed at Pocantico.



## Fall Sports Teams Were Small but Competitive

Pocantico fielded boys and girls soccer teams and a girls volleyball team during the fall modified sports season, which ended in late October. Boys soccer had a full roster of players, while the girls teams had fewer members.

All teams were strong and competitive, Athletic Director Robert Slotoroff said.

The boys soccer team had combined seventh- and eighth-grade participation from approximately 15 boys. While they did not notch many wins, all games were close in score and fiercely competitive.

Pocantico had difficulty filling the girls soccer roster with the required number of players (11) and began the season with eight. But these eight girls stuck together and played a full schedule of games. Opposing teams were flexible and often played 8 on 8, which provided for excellent competition, Mr. Slotoroff said.

The soccer teams faced challenges from Mother Nature in the form of rain-soaked fields, which led to some muddy games.

The girls volleyball team had only nine players, the majority of whom were rookies. But they won most of their contests. Coach Mo Gallery taught the girls the basic strategies and skills, and they responded with strong play. Each girl contributed to a successful season.

Four Pocantico students contributed positively to a merged football program with Sleepy Hollow.

The winter sports season begins after Thanksgiving. Pocantico will support boys and girls basketball teams. The school will be sending several students to a merged wrestling program with Sleepy Hollow.



## Ninth-Grader Was High Point Champion in County Swim Meet

Congratulations to Sabrina C., who was the Westchester County High Point Champion in the 13/14 age group at the Westchester County Swimming Association Championship last August!

Sabrina took first place among a competitive field of swimmers in the 100-yard butterfly and 100-yard breaststroke, both of which contributed to her high point total. Her times were 59.36 seconds and 1:11.62, respectively. She also had great swims in the 100-yard freestyle and women's 17 and under individual medley. She came in third in the freestyle and fourth in the individual medley.

"I'm very proud to have represented Pocantico at this meet among some very large swim teams from across

Westchester County," Sabrina said of the championship, which took place in Rye. "It was also special to have my sister Alyssa coaching me during this meet with her assistant coaches Nicole and Megan. They kept me focused and it was fun having them there."

Sabrina, a member of the Rivertown Rays club team, excelled in other competitions this summer. In the USA Swimming Meets, she set new team records in the 200-yard and 400-yard individual medley races, and the 100-yard and 200-yard butterfly races. She also qualified for the 2018 Junior Olympics and the Senior Metropolitan Championship.

Sabrina is a freshman at Sleepy Hollow High School.



## Pocantico Celebrates Halloween

Princesses, dinosaurs, skeletons and inflatable animals took over the Pocantico campus October 31 as students participated in the Halloween Parade. The band played the theme from "Ghostbusters" as the younger children showed off their costumes. Classrooms held parties after the parade.



# Seven Talented Educators Join the School Staff

The school welcomed six teachers and a guidance counselor who recently started working in the district:

- **Elizabeth Cirieco** is a specialist who supports the needs of middle school special education students in an inclusive, co-taught model. She previously taught algebra and special education at Bronx Envision Academy, a high school.
- **Emma Goodman** teaches fifth-grade math and science. Before taking this job, she was a fifth-grade math teacher in the White Plains School District.
- **Elizabeth Greene**, who was a leave replacement teaching assistant in physical education last year, is now a part-time physical education, health, and family and consumer science teacher. She is a former physical education and health teacher in Queens.
- **Andrew Irons** teaches grades 7 and 8 English language arts. He previously taught high school English at Bronx Envision Academy and has a background in theater as a playwright.
- **Allison O'Connor** teaches elementary special education. She formerly taught second grade at St. Ignatius Loyola School in Manhattan.
- **Cesar Sanchez** is the Spanish teacher. He previously taught Spanish at Woodlands Middle School in Greenburgh.
- **Sara Sonne** is the elementary school guidance counselor who also works in the Therapeutic Support Center. She previously spent 10 years as a guidance counselor for the New York City Department of Education. She started at Pocantico in November 2017.



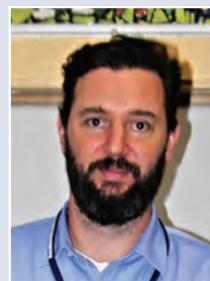
Elizabeth Cirieco



Emma Goodman



Elizabeth Greene



Andrew Irons



Allison O'Connor



Cesar Sanchez



Sara Sonne

## CITIZENSHIP continued from page 1

promote cultural awareness, appreciation and service learning through helping, respecting, protecting and acting. It connects with the social-emotional learning that is taking place schoolwide, as well as the work of the district's Diversity Committee.

In response to Ms. Saeed's question, fourth grader Swara K. said "I want everyone to have a chance to make the world better."

In late October, students took part in One World Week, an annual event when people focus on global justice issues. This year's theme was "The World is Changing – How about us?" Signs in the school hallways listed each of the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which include no poverty, quality education and gender equality. Groups of students with iPads scanned the QR code on each sign, which brought up a related video. Some of the videos gave students ideas on how to act.

Eighth-grader Olivia P. said a video titled "MAN vs. EARTH" was eye-opening. Humans have done so much damage for the fraction of

time they have been on Earth. "There are so many things that are going to happen if we don't do anything," she said.

In a recent meeting, the Diversity Committee discussed ideas for additional global citizenship events, such as a giving project for the holidays and a global learning conference in the spring. They also talked about hosting an event that highlights families' diverse cultures, foods and backgrounds.

"It would give families an opportunity to celebrate and be proud of where they come from and who they are," Principal Brent Harrington said.

As for the Global Read Aloud event, children and staff did a lot of preparation. In Jolene Morotti's art class, students cut out tracings of their hands and drew henna-style designs on them. Ms. Morotti posted them all on a bulletin board. She taped an oversized left hand and right hand with similar designs and the word welcome on the auditorium doors.

As she cut out the hands that she traced, sixth-grader Brithany M. said she thinks it's unfair that Amal had to leave school in the book. The protagonist's dream is to become a teacher.

"There's a lot of gender inequality in Pakistan," she said. "Boys have better schools than the girls."

On the day of the visit, about a dozen students from grades 3 to 8 were invited to eat lunch with the author. Chef Kassie Arcate made chicken korma, peas and rice. Later in the day, the author, who is Pakistani-American, did a book-signing.

During her presentations, Ms. Saeed told students about the importance of perseverance, one of the three character traits in the pledge students recite each day. Her first book, "Written in the Stars," was rejected by 29 publishers before one accepted it.

"Just remember that you can't get something if you don't try for it and anything is possible."

# Daily Character Pledge Reminds Students to Be Kind, Persevere

When Stephanie J. recites the character pledge at school every morning, it reminds her to treat others with respect and kindness throughout the day.

“The character pledge says smile and greet people in the hallways,” she said. “That’s the simplest thing, but it can mean so much to someone. I think just smiling or saying ‘Hey’ could make someone’s day.”

Stephanie and the rest of the eighth-graders spent the first week of the school year crafting the 50-word pledge. “I liked how they asked the eighth-graders to write the character pledge,” she said. “We’re kids, and we write from our heart, whereas I think the teachers would have made it very formal, or just come up with only one person’s ideas.”

With the pledge, the school is being proactive in emphasizing the values and behaviors it expects from students, Principal Brent Harrington said. “When you make a pledge, you’re making a commitment throughout the course of the day,” he said.

The pledge grew out of a new code of conduct that a committee of educators developed over the summer. “We didn’t want a whole new code of conduct and then never talk about it again,” said teacher Michael Murray, who worked with teachers Terry Hongell and Katell Carruth to guide students in writing the pledge.

The teachers met with eighth-graders to discuss school environment, culture and expectations. Smaller groups talked about the meaning of Pocantico’s three core values: kindness, respect and perseverance. Next, group members wrote sentences about the meaning of the three words.

The students and teachers worked the best of those sentences into the pledge.

“We had considered just developing the pledge ourselves or inviting a few students, but the consensus of the group was that if we’re going to have buy-in from the older kids, one of the key things was we needed them to actually do it,” Mr. Murray said.

Eighth-graders were enthusiastic about developing the character pledge, Mr. Murray said. “I think a lot of them realize that this is something that they’re going to be passing on to the next generation of kids, kind of a lasting legacy to Pocantico,” he said.

Eighth-graders Sedge A. and Peter A. said classmates cooperated and worked well together.

“It was a really great team-building activity for the eighth grade,” Sedge said.

Sedge said one of his contributions was emphasizing the importance of the pledge having a good rhythm. It’s easier to remember it that way, he said.

Classmate Jordyn E. said she liked that everyone worked together toward a common goal. “And we all worked hard to help little kids to understand that you need to be respectful and to be kind, and you need to persevere through it all because sometimes life just gets chaotic,” she said.

Stephanie said it’s also important for students to treat themselves well. “Sometimes we even need to be kind to ourselves, like when we’re going through problems, we have to tell ourselves ‘It’s OK. You’re going to be OK,’” she said. “You don’t have to be so hard on yourself.”

“  
*As a student of character  
at Pocantico Hills ...  
I pledge to not give up when  
obstacles are in the way.  
I will persevere.  
I will listen to others  
and use careful words.  
I will be respectful.  
I will smile and greet people  
in the hallways.  
I will be kind.*”

## MAKERSPACE continued from page 1

Keira said she was enjoying the class. “I like that we can express our emotions in pictures and work together as friends,” she said.

The Makerspace has a relaxed atmosphere. There are multiple seating options, including yellow beanbags and Wobble chairs. The tables have wheels and the height is adjustable. Large moveable storage carts are filled with supplies – felt, foam shapes, markers, littleBits electronic building blocks, rubber bands and more.

The Pocantico Hills Foundation provided financial support to help launch the Makerspace.

Students from kindergarten through fifth grade currently use the Makerspace. They work on different projects, depending on the grade. Second-graders will study types of communities – urban, suburban and rural – and build models of them, for example. Kindergarteners will make hand puppets to tell their stories, which link to their reading and writing.

Children are excited about the Makerspace, teacher Terry Hongell said. In the first class, she read them the book “What Do You Do with an Idea?” by Kobi Yamada.

“First-graders didn’t want to leave after the first class,” Ms. Hongell said. “They all said, ‘Can we come back?’”

In their second visit, first-graders chose supplies to work with, from Styrofoam balls and felt to magnetized foam shapes. “Right now, it’s really an exploratory phase to understand what resources are available,” Ms. Hongell said.

She is working with classroom teachers to create inquiries that link to their curriculum, said Adam Brown, Pocantico’s director of curriculum and technology.

“We’ll build out additional units as we go through the year,” Mr. Brown said, adding that the district is working with a curriculum consultant.

In the fourth-grade class doing photography, Swara K. and Sarah A. found a book on origami and made two white swans. They placed the paper birds on a blue sheet of paper with waves drawn on it. A speech bubble next to one of the swans said “Do you want to become friends?”

“Maybe at the end, we’ll put a heart between them,” Swara said.

In another part of the classroom, Daniel M. worked on the pencil photos with four classmates. For the first shot, three of them sat at a table with their heads down and pencils to paper while one teammate on a ladder aimed the iPad down at them. They did a close-up shot for the next picture so they could capture the pencil users’ facial expressions as the tips broke.

Daniel said he likes being in the class because “we do pictures, and it’s a lot more fun than gym. It’s more fun than sports other than soccer.”

# New Therapeutic Support Center Program Assists All Students

A new Therapeutic Support Center program has allowed the district to expand social and emotional assistance and support for all children and bring back some special education students placed outside of the district.

While most school districts' therapeutic support programs are limited to special needs students, Pocantico's is open to all children, said Celia Strino, the district's Committee on Special Education chair and supervisor of student services.

"We're very small here and so it really is an attempt to be proactive and support the entire learning community with the social-emotional supports that are necessary to have a healthy and thriving school community," she said.

The Therapeutic Support Center team includes teacher Mario Suarez; school counselors James McVeigh and Sara Sonne; Dr. Glenn Pollack, school psychologist; and crisis support aide Daniel Downes.

"We are excited to launch this new program to support children with special needs as well as all children as they go through the ups and downs that accompany growing up," Superintendent Carol Conklin-Spillane said. "We believe that focusing on these proactive measures will support both student achievement and well-being."

The team is using the dialectical behavior therapy model of counseling, or DBT, which teaches skills for emotional regulation, interpersonal effectiveness and mindfulness. They will share what they learned with the entire staff, and parents can learn about DBT in family workshops being held throughout the year.

Many school districts use DBT, Ms. Strino said. The skills are consistent with Pocantico's emotional intelligence initiative, which teaches students how to control impulses, self-regulate and manage their emotions.

"In general there's a need for social-emotional



**Therapeutic Support Center staff, from left to right: Daniel Downes, Sara Sonne, Mario Suarez. (Not pictured: James McVeigh and Dr. Glenn Pollack.)**

learning. We've all seen that students tend to experience a lot of anxiety," Ms. Strino said. "School's harder than it used to be. We ask a lot of students, and there are a lot of external pressures and environmental pressures."

The Therapeutic Support Center room is a safe place for students to go when they need extra support or a break. "It's not punitive. It's really an emotional wellness center that seeks to build the social-emotional skills of the students," Ms. Strino said.

Another new DBT initiative that was piloted last spring and expanded in the fall is Co-Lab. The program, which runs for the first half hour of each day, assists children who are not regulated and ready to learn when they arrive at school. The Co-Lab is an environment where they can

receive DBT, have breakfast and work on passion projects related to their coursework.

While the counseling office is the hub of the Therapeutic Support Program, services are delivered wherever they are needed, including in classrooms and at home, Ms. Strino said.

If there are concerns about a particular student, the team members pull together the child's teachers and evaluate what kind of help is needed. They also coordinate with families to make sure supports carry over into the home.

The Center staff are also being trained in non-violent crisis intervention and de-escalation.

The school is developing a Restorative Justice Initiative as part of the Therapeutic Support Center program, Ms. Strino said. Restorative justice focuses on having students reflect on what they did wrong and make amends.

The programs that are being developed at Pocantico are closely aligned with the new state benchmarks, policies and programs to reduce students' emotional distress, improve academic achievement and reduce disruptive behavior, Ms. Strino said.

The district is also aligning this work to the new state law that requires enhanced mental health education in schools.

The Therapeutic Support Center staff will be developing more community partnerships, Ms. Strino said. Pocantico currently works with the Second Step Program and Project Adventure.

"The team is building all the programs, they're building the partnerships, they're partnering with teams and teachers and parents to understand where the needs are, and it's going to be growing organically," she said.

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## Capital Project Proposal to Be Revisited Next Summer

On October 25, the Board of Education decided to place the proposed capital project on hold due to a disparity in the level of support in the school community.

Board members said they would revisit the project in the summer of 2019, after a new school superintendent is hired.

"It is my opinion that moving forward without a consensus of support for the project will not likely result in a positive outcome, and it is best to refocus our efforts in the short term,"

Superintendent Carol Conklin-Spillane wrote in a letter to community members.

Ms. Conklin-Spillane is retiring at the end of the school year, and the school board is conducting a search for a replacement.

The proposed work included redoing four of the tennis courts; expanding parking; renovating the handicapped entrance ramp and nearby curbs and parking; moving fuel tanks; and other projects. Separate votes would have been held on upgrading the athletic fields and installing air conditioning in the gym.

School district officials will address funding for any needed repairs during the 2019-20 budget process.

The superintendent thanked everyone who helped shape the proposal by serving on committees, completing surveys, attending meetings and sharing their ideas in the past three years.

"This work will provide a solid springboard for future consideration," she said.

POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL  
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Brent Harrington, Principal  
Adam Brown, Director of Curriculum & Instruction/CIO  
Celia Strino, Supervisor of Student Services

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Susan Burlazzi, Trustee  
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## The District's Mission in Operation: Following Action Plans to Achieve Goals

Pocantico's teachers and other staff strive each day to help students reach their academic, creative, physical and emotional potential. The district carefully plots out the actions and initiatives that are needed to make this mission a reality.

This is the second year of a three-year action plan for district and school initiatives that will help Pocantico achieve its objectives.

One of the districtwide initiatives is to recognize and celebrate the school community's rich diversity and implement culturally competent practices. Pocantico adopted a new world language curriculum last year for all children in kindergarten through eighth grade. This year's school action plan calls for weaving content-area connections into each grade level; building reading and writing skills; and identifying opportunities to align curriculum across content areas.

Another part of the school action plan is a global citizenship initiative to promote awareness and appreciation of other cultures. The school recently participated in One World Week, which promotes the understanding of global issues, and learning that everyone can make a difference.

The school continues to expand its emphasis on social-emotional intelligence, from implementing a new character pledge to having students use a Mood Meter to help them recognize their emotions as well as others'. The pledge emphasizes kindness, respect and perseverance.

Other schoolwide goals are centered on curriculum development in reading, writing, social studies, math and science. In reading and writing,

the plan calls for refining reading and writing workshop units; expanding classroom libraries; designing an evening literacy event for families; and building internal leadership capacity.

In computer science, staff are working to integrate the International Society for Technology in Education standards across curricula in all grades, and expand inquiry-based learning. In math, they are designing lessons and building capacity for instruction in all grades.

In social studies and science, the school is aligning local curriculum with the state's Social Studies Framework and Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers are developing project-based learning units at every grade level, meaning students work together to solve problems.

On the districtwide level, the capital project is on hold. On October 25, the Board of Education opted to take up the issue again next summer.

These are some of the other districtwide initiatives:

- Developing leadership capacity and strengthening the team process and professional collaboration
- Designing new evaluation processes for administrators and non-instructional staff and cross-training support staff
- Adapting to new mandates and regulatory changes
- Maintaining fiscal stability
- Building fund reserves.