



Farewell
Pastor departs after seven
years with parish
p 3

DOBBS FERRY

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RIVERTOWNS Dispatch

\$2.75

Look inside for
back-to-school news!

WWW.RIVERTOWNSDISPATCH.COM ARDSLEY — DOBBS FERRY — HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON — IRVINGTON — SLEEPY HOLLOW — TARRYTOWN



IRVINGTON

Day 1

Students arrive at Dows Lane Elementary School on Thursday, Sept. 3, which was the first day of school in Irvington and the second day in Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Sleepy Hollow, and Tarrytown. This issue of the Dispatch includes back-to-school stories about all six villages as well as the addition of pages for Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown.



TARRYTOWN

Former student returns as principal
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launch partners

E **EDGE-ON-HUDSON**
A New View On The River

the pocantico center
Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Tranquility Spa
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School bus safety program leads to decrease in violations

*Three Rivertowns districts
among 22 participants*

BY LAURA SCHILLER

REGION Westchester County's School Bus Safety Program has helped reduce the number of drivers illegally passing stopped school buses, with violations falling nearly 24% from the 2024–25 school year to 2025–26, according to the County's School Bus Safety Annual Report.

Violations dropped from 17,867 to 13,621, while average monthly violations fell from 1,786 to 1,513.

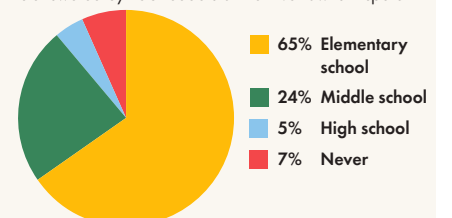
The program, which launched in 2024, grew out of a 2019 state law authorizing local governments and school districts to use cameras on school buses to catch drivers who illegally pass stopped buses. Westchester County subsequently created a county-wide program, allowing participating school districts to take advantage of a single system

Continued on page 4

The Poll

When should kids start getting homework?

As answered by 153 readers of the Rivertowns Dispatch



Vote at rivertownsdispatch.com/the-weekly-poll



The Blotter

ARDSLEY

Knock and run: An unknown person knocked on the front door of a Revere Road home and then fled on the evening of Saturday, Aug. 29.

DOBBS FERRY

Ulta theft: Two unidentified women shoplifted \$555 worth of items from the Ulta Beauty at Rivertowns Square on the evening of Friday, Aug. 28. The theft was reported to the police on Aug. 29.

HASTINGS

Suspended license and registration: A 38-year-old Yonkers resident was arrested for a suspended driver's license and vehicle

registration, both misdemeanors, on Warburton Avenue on the afternoon of Tuesday, Aug. 25.

Unregistered and uninsured: A 49-year-old Yonkers resident was charged with three vehicle-and-traffic violations on Warburton Avenue on the morning of Saturday, Aug. 29. He was cited for an unregistered and uninsured vehicle, and for improper license plates.

Unauthorized charge: On Aug. 29, a Hastings resident reported that an unauthorized charge of \$7,200 had been made to her credit card on July 31. The charge was supposed to be in the amount of \$2,400 for an airline ticket.

Coyote sighting: Multiple callers reported a coyote at Zinsser Park on the morning of Sunday, Aug. 30.

IRVINGTON

Mischief to field: On Aug.

31, the Irvington School District's facilities director reported that an unknown person had defecated on the 50-yard line of the artificial turf field at the middle/high school and that the turf had been cut in a possible attempt to remove part of it.

Off-the-leash violation: A 51-year-old Tarrytown resident was cited because her off-the-leash dog scratched a 7-year-old child at Scenic Hudson Park on the afternoon of Tuesday, Sept. 1. She received a summons for dog at large, a violation of the village code.

Electric trio: Three unidentified youths on electric scooters were reported southbound on Broadway at Main Street on the evening of Tuesday, Sept. 1. The trio was not caught.

Suspended license: A 40-year-old Irvington resident was arrested for a suspended driver's license, a misdemeanor, on South Broadway on the evening

of Tuesday, Sept. 1. She was also cited for running a red light and for an unregistered vehicle.

TARRYTOWN

Obstruction arrest: A 31-year-old Tarrytown resident was arrested for fleeing on foot from police who attempted to cite him for an open container of alcohol on Central Avenue on the morning of Tuesday, Aug. 25. Sleepy Hollow police apprehended him on Aug. 27. He was charged with obstructing governmental administration in the second degree, a misdemeanor, and for the open container, a violation.

Abandoned Subaru: An unregistered 2005 Subaru Legacy with improper license plates was towed from municipal parking lot F, along the west side of the train tracks, on the morning of Wednesday, Aug. 26.

Wanted no more: A 29-year-old Bronx resident

wanted for missing an appearance in Tarrytown Village Court turned herself in on Wednesday, Aug. 26. She was released on \$250 bail. In 2024, she was charged with grand larceny in the fourth degree, a misdemeanor, for an unauthorized withdrawal of \$1,850 from a bank account.

Mischief arrest: A 39-year-old man whose last known address was in Brooklyn was arrested on Aug. 27 for damaging a coin-operated vacuum at the Coco Farms Shell station, 372 Broadway (Route 9), on Friday, Aug. 21. He was charged with criminal mischief in the second degree, a felony. Det. Matt Garro made the arrest.

Assault on bus: An unidentified woman hit a 19-year-old woman in the back of the head on a Hudson Link bus, and then fled at a stop at 35 South Broadway, on the afternoon of Friday, Aug. 28. The victim was treated at a hospital.

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ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER ORKIN LEWIS

Pastor departs after seven years with parish

BY TIM LAMORTE

DOBBS FERRY

The Rev. Chris Monturo bid farewell to the parishioners of Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Pompeii this past week. The 54-year-old had led both churches since July 1, 2019.

On Sept. 1, Monturo became the pastor at the Church of the Resurrection in Rye, where he replaced Msgr. Donald Dwyer, who retired after 15 years.

In Dobbs Ferry, Monturo was succeeded by the Rev. Richard Smith, who was the pastor of two churches in upstate Beacon — St. Joachim and St. John the Evangelist — from September 2019 to this past July. Smith directs the permanent diaconate program for the Archdiocese of New York at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers.

The archdiocese publicized the new assignments for Monturo, Smith, and other priests, as well as retirements, on July 27.

During his tenure, Monturo oversaw upgrades to both church buildings as well as the 125th anniversary of Sacred Heart in 2020 and the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Pompeii in 2022. Cardinal Timothy Dolan presided over a mass for the latter on Oct. 1, 2022.

Monturo also led parishioners on pilgrimages to shrines in Manhattan (2022), Massachusetts (2023), and Philadelphia (2023), and to the Holy Land and Italy (2023), Washington, D.C. (2024), and Italy, Greece, and Turkey (2025).

Monturo's final mass at Our Lady of Pompeii was Sunday, Aug. 30, as renovations continued at Sacred Heart. Gerry Scales, the president of the parish council, presented



The Rev. Chris Monturo leads his final mass at Our Lady of Pompeii Church on Aug. 30.

him with a statue of the Holy Family. During his homily, Monturo reflected on his seven years in Dobbs Ferry.

“Together we prayed, celebrated, mourned, laughed, struggled, and dreamed as a team.”

Rev. Chris Monturo

“Together we prayed, celebrated, mourned, laughed, struggled, and dreamed as a team, together,” he told the parishioners. “We

renewed and cared for our parish facilities, strengthened our ministries, reached out to the wider community, cared for the poor and vulnerable, traveled the world on our parish pilgrimages.”

Monturo also noted that his “greatest accomplishment” as pastor was “celebrating mass each day for, and with, my people. Nothing could compare to that.”

Monturo was ordained at St. Patrick's Cathedral, by Cardinal Edward Egan, on May 17, 2003, and was assigned to St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx. He was then the pastor at St. Anthony of Padua in West Harrison from 2007–2019.

Sleepy Hollow mayor talks about initiatives

BY TIMOTHY REUTER

The Rivertowns Dispatch Podcast recently spoke with Sleepy Hollow Mayor Marjorie Hsu, who also serves as vice chair of the New York Community Trust – Westches-

ter and co-chair of the Westchester County Asian American Advisory Board. The transcript excerpted below is lightly edited for clarity. You can listen

to the full interview on Spotify or Apple Podcasts or visit anchor.fm/rivertownsdispatch.

RIVERTOWNS
Dispatch
Podcast

Rivertowns Dispatch Podcast (RDP): *You've highlighted three initial priorities for your administration, including fiscal stability, the health of the downtown, and affordable housing. Westchester is what I think of as a high-tax, high-service area. How do you think about balancing taxation, services, and inflation in a sustainable way?*

Mayor Hsu: The beauty of serving as a local official is you eat what you cook, right? I don't want to do anything to my neighbors that I wouldn't want to inflict upon myself or the rest of the board. So, it's very important to be fiscally responsible, not only for the short term, but for the long term. I think it's important to be strategic and make sure we have reasonable taxes that don't put us in financial jeopardy in two or five or 10 or 30 years from now. It really is a balancing act, as you say.

RDP: *Why do you think Sleepy Hollow and the Rivertowns, more generally, struggle to maintain businesses in their downtowns and what can local leadership do about it?*

Mayor Hsu: I think it's a question of focus. And we formed three task forces when we first took office December 1. One was on housing affordability, as you mentioned, the other is downtown revitalization, and then the third is tourism and Halloween, because we are crushed with visitors in the fall.

As soon as we took office, we passed a vacant storefront surcharge. So if your storefront is vacant — and many of our storefronts have been vacant for a very long time — we've been trying to encourage landlords to open stores and restaurants and eateries. But the carrot approach wasn't working, so we implemented this fine structure that's escalating, that is in effect now, so that the absentee landlords that don't even live in the Rivertowns, that don't live in Sleepy Hollow, cannot continue to take Sleepy

Continued on page 19

Fifth Lighthouse Swim raises \$67K for trio of charities



Sixty-year-old Lloyd Robinson of White Plains and 34-year-old Jonathan Hinds of Manhattan race toward the finish at Kingsland Point Park.

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Eighty-four swimmers crossed the Hudson River from Memorial Park in Nyack to Kingsland Point Park in Sleepy Hollow during the fifth annual Lighthouse Swim on the morning of Sunday, Aug. 30. As of Sept. 3, the event had raised \$67,806 for Feeding Westchester, the Soup Angels of Nyack, and the Nyack Center. Donations were still being accepted at www.thelighthouseswim.org.

The swimmers, who ranged in age from 15 to 75, were led by 43-year-old Adam Homoki, a clinical coordinator in the acute cardiac care unit at Boston Children's Hospital, who finished first in 1:23:44. He was followed by 39-year-old Fiona Gispén (1:26:26) and 42-year-old Naomi Cookson (1:40:51), who both live in Brooklyn.

Though the start of the swim was timed to coincide with slack tide, the current pushed the swimmers north as the morning progressed. Fire and police boats, kayakers, jet skiers, and paddleboarders served as escorts. Terry McGlynn of Sleepy Hollow and Sue Klein of White Plains led the team that organized the event.

School bus safety program
Continued from page 1

rather than establish their own.

The camera safety program encompasses 22 school districts, including Ardsley, Irvington, and Tarrytown. Hastings and Dobbs Ferry use different contractors with cameras on their buses.

The county program utilizes BusPatrol cameras to capture license plates and multiple views of vehicles that pass while a school bus' red lights are flashing and its stop arm is extended. The footage is then reviewed by law enforcement before a citation is sent to the vehicle's registered owner.

The violations do not result in points being added to a driver's license, nor do they impact motor vehicle insurance rates. Under the bus stop-arm camera law, a first violation carries a \$250 penalty, a second violation within 18 months carries a \$275 penalty, and a third or subsequent violation within 18 months carries a \$300 penalty.

When drivers receive a citation, they can log onto the program's website and watch a video of their vehicle making the alleged illegal pass, a feature County Executive Ken Jenkins said has helped educate drivers.

"One of the things people didn't realize was that it didn't matter whether you had a double yellow line or concrete Jersey barriers between the road," Jenkins told the Dispatch. "When a school bus stops and has its red lights on, it doesn't matter if there's a barrier and somebody would have to do pole vaults to get across the road. You still have

to stop. And that was part of the education."

Under New York State law, drivers approaching a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing must stop, even when a median or other physical barrier separates the lanes of traffic. Drivers can be cited for passing a stopped school bus from either direction.

The violations most often involve drivers who live locally and are commuting or traveling to school, according to Jenkins, who added that the County has not received significant pushback from residents about the program. Still, some drivers have questioned citations they received.

Ada Menaker of Dobbs Ferry, who lives within the Ardsley School District, received a citation last spring for an incident involving her car while her babysitter was driving on Central Avenue. When the citation arrived, it did not look to her like a typical traffic ticket.

"I get this violation and it's \$250, which is not a little bit of money," Menaker told the Dispatch. "First off, I was like, 'Who are these people sending me this ticket?' I go to the website, I watch the video, and can't tell what's going on. It's multiple lanes of traffic. You can't even tell that the car is moving."

Menaker responded through the website, contending that the video did not provide enough evidence to establish a violation. She said she has not yet received a response.

"I live on a small road, and I understand the importance of people needing to stop for the bus," she said. "But on Central Avenue, across six lanes of traffic, where you can't even see from the video what's going on? If I saw somebody speeding by a school

bus on our road, that would be one thing. But on Central Avenue, I just don't know..."

Menaker works in investor relations for a company focused on autonomous-driving technology, a background that makes her skeptical of automated enforcement systems.

Jillian Hennemy of Ardsley, a paralegal, was also cited after driving past a school bus on Central Avenue enroute to picking up her 7-year-old daughter from a private school in Yonkers.

"It was across multiple lanes and there was literally a divider in between, making it nearly impossible to see the bus on the other side, especially with all the cars driving past me," Hennemy told the Dispatch. "I didn't even realize the bus was there. And even if I did, it was across so many lanes plus a whole median. I wouldn't have known to stop because all the other cars were driving past me."

Hennemy initially responded to the first citation by requesting a hearing, but she didn't hear back before the due date, and by then a \$25 penalty was added. She ultimately appeared before a judge at the Yonkers Parking Violations Office.

"I must've looked at the video multiple times before I noticed my car. The judge said I still had to pay because it was my obligation to stop," she said, adding that the judge dismissed the late penalty.

The experiences of Menaker and Hennemy highlight the challenges some drivers face in understanding violations captured on multilane roads.

Jack Coxen, the Ardsley School District's transportation supervisor, said illegally

passing a stopped school bus is far more common on local roads than on multilane highways. He characterized those cases as the exception rather than the norm.

"There's no way a judge, in his best day, is going to say, 'You've got that kind of violation,' when the person may not even be able to see that there are flashing lights in another lane, especially with tractor-trailers going by," Coxen said. "So I don't think that's really a big issue."

Coxen said school bus drivers are trained to activate their amber warning lights within 300 feet of a planned stop, after checking for traffic, giving motorists a clear warning that the bus is preparing to stop before the red lights and stop arm are activated.

Despite some skepticism about individual citations, Jenkins believes increased awareness is helping drive compliance. Less than 5% of the violations involve repeat offenders, he said. Jenkins added that about 31% of violations occur at roughly 20 locations around the county, which can help officials identify where additional safety measures may be needed.

"Because school bus routes can run along local, county, and state roads, we're able to go back to the appropriate traffic safety people and make improvements," Jenkins said. "Maybe we add additional traffic control devices to slow people down, whether it's a roundabout or traffic light, or we lower the speed limit."

As the reopening of schools approached, Jenkins had a simple message for drivers.

"Please just focus on the road and be careful," he said. "Remember that it's up to all of us to make sure everyone is safe when we're behind the wheel."

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ARDSLEY

Municipal Office Closure
Monday, Sept. 7 in observance of Labor Day.

School Board Meeting
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 7 p.m.
High school library. Agenda and link to the livestream available at ardsleyschools.org

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 7:30 p.m.
Village Hall. Agenda available at ardsleyvillage.gov

Senior Event:
Red Cross Presentation
Wednesday, Sept. 9, noon–1 p.m. Community center.

9/11 Memorial Ceremony
Friday, Sept. 11, 8:40 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Firefighter Park (near Addyman Square).

Call for Artists:
RiverArts Studio Tour
Registration (\$60 per artist) is open through Sept. 12 at

riverarts.org. The tour is slated for Nov. 7–8.

“Humans of Ardsley”
Sign up and/or share personal experiences on Oct. 4, followed by a live community event in December. instagram.com/villageofardsley

Ayo Obi Ardsley Tennis Tournament
Saturday, Sept. 19, 9 a.m.–noon women’s doubles, 1–4 p.m. men’s doubles; Sunday, Sept. 20, 9 a.m.–noon mixed doubles. Rain dates: Sept 26–27. Fee: \$25 resident, \$35 nonresident. Register: ardsleymy.myrec.com

District receives donations

The Ardsley Board of Education began the 2026–27 school year approving donations from parent organizations on Aug. 26.

The Ardsley Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) donated \$1,500 for an internment camp speaker to present to eighth- and 11th-graders at Ardsley Middle School and Ardsley High School. The PTSA also gave \$2,400 toward the Summer Learning Academy for Concord Road Elementary School. Ardsley Music Partners donated \$531.66 for an upright bass rental at AHS and \$6,912.76 for a baritone saxophone at AMS.

The board also approved a \$1,000 donation from Fidelity Charitable for the Lorraine Drake Lombardi Scholarship Fund, as well as \$3,450 from the Panthers Family Fund for financial assistance with after-school and camp activities at CRS.

Strategic plan in the works

The school district will develop a new strategic plan, according to board of education president Hrishi Karthikeyan. During the board meeting on Aug. 26, Karthikeyan stated he will provide periodic updates on the district’s “advocacy work around policy and legislative proposals, particularly at the state and regional level.” Areas of focus include universal pre-K, “keeping tax dollars in our public schools,” and developing policies around technology and A.I.

E-bikes restricted at schools

The Ardsley School District will enforce restrictions for e-bike use on campus, Schools Superintendent Matthew Block shared in an email blast to the community on Aug. 26.

The Ardsley Village Board of Trustees proposed legislation related to e-bikes on Aug. 3, which will be the subject of a public hearing at their Sept. 8 meeting. Block wrote in his email that the school district will work with the police to enforce the restrictions included in the proposed law.

Although some students rely on e-bikes as a mode of transportation, Block said the district has grown “increasingly concerned about safety when it comes to students’ use of these vehicles, particularly on school property.”

Last spring, Block wrote, the district “reviewed video of students weaving through our school buses on e-bikes in the Concord Road School parking lot while student pickup was occurring.” There were also instances of students riding e-bikes on the district’s athletic fields after school hours. The wheels “put holes in our fields and ruined the efforts of our grounds personnel who work hard to keep our fields playable for athletics,” Block wrote.

On school property, Block stated that e-bikes may not be ridden for recreational purposes.

— Amy Bochner



Spanish teachers Erin O’Leary and Maria Spina inside O’Leary’s new classroom, which is part of the addition to Ardsley High School.

Students return to new faces and facilities



Building upgrades to continue at all three schools

BY AMY BOCHNER

September 2 marked the first day of school in Ardsley, with students being introduced to new teachers, facilities, and scheduling.

This year, the district welcomes 23 educators — eight at Concord Road Elementary School, three at Ardsley Middle School, and 12 at Ardsley High School — as noted by Schools Superintendent Matthew Block at the Aug. 25 board of education meeting.

The district’s three buildings were all upgraded over the summer, part of the \$53,499,000 capital plan that was supported by the \$49,999,000 bond voters approved in 2024.

At AMS, the new entrance and security upgrades were completed, with the auditorium renovations “well underway,” Block said. He anticipates that “we’re looking to see some wonderful shows in [the auditorium] beginning in November.” Significant work has been done on the new science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) classroom, but that space won’t be ready until next September.

Construction is underway at CRS, including the library renovations, which will be done by early November. Work on the

entrance and security upgrades also began over the summer and, according to Block, is expected to be wrap up early next month.

AHS had the bulk of the facility improvements and additions. Last summer, two new classrooms, which were used as instruction spaces, were added to the second floor. This year, these will be used for science, with movable tables and chairs. Before the start of the 2026–27 school year, a new addition to the back of the school was completed, offering four new classrooms.

The cafeteria was repainted and refurbished, and can now seat more than 300 students, compared to its previous capacity of 200. There are also new tables in the commons area, which now can accommodate 400 people at lunch. The increase in cafeteria and commons seating coincides with the high school’s new rotating drop schedule, which began the second day of school.

Previously, the high school schedule had nine 44-minute periods, alternating between A and B days. Students could take at least seven classes, or add an eighth in place of a lunch period. The last period of the day was designated for students to access extra help.

Because some students did not have a lunch period, this prompted the district to create a new schedule, which utilizes a four-day rotation cycle (A, B, C, D) where students attend six out of their eight classes daily. There are three 57-minute periods before and after an hour-long lunch, ensuring that

everyone has time to eat. As students will be taking eight classes, one morning and one afternoon class are dropped each day. The courses that are dropped systematically rotate each day, so they are dropped once every four days on the A, B, C, D planned cycle. Four morning classes rotate through each of the three morning time slots, as do the four afternoon classes with the three afternoon time slots.

To maintain the previous science lab/physical education (PE) rotation, the new schedule also incorporates “blue” and “gold” days. These indicate whether a student has a science lab or PE that day.

Block shared that the district believes the new schedule will benefit students by varying instruction, offering more time for self-care, and increasing access to extra help and support centers. Because students have more time to take additional classes without sacrificing lunch, AHS added new business, music, and AP courses this year.

According to Block, educators have been working “all spring to prepare to teach in 57-minute periods.”

“You will see that after we get used to it, after a week or two, there will be a less frenetic pace of the day, a decreased number of transitions, which solves that stress that goes along with a lot of movement during the day,” he said. “We are so excited that this year, all of our students will be doing the healthy and self-caring thing of having a daily lunch period.”



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DOBBS FERRY

Ferry Festa

Register for sponsorships and vendors at ferryfesta.com. Late fee after Friday, Sept. 4. The annual street fair on Main and Cedar streets is slated for Saturday, Oct. 3, 1–8 p.m. (rain date Oct. 4).

Municipal Office Closure

Monday, Sept. 7 in observance of Labor Day

Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing

Tuesday, Sept. 8, 6:30 p.m. Village Hall. For info: dobbsferry.gov/comprehensive-plan

Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 8, 6:30 p.m. for the workshop and 7:30 for the regular meeting. Village Hall. Agenda at dobbsferry.gov.

Zoning Board Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 9, 8 p.m. Village Hall. Agenda available

at dobbsferry.gov

Chess Class for All Ages

Thursday, Sept. 10, 4–6 p.m. Dobbs Ferry Public Library. Register: reference@dobbsferrylibrary.org

9/11 Memorial Service

Friday, Sept. 11, 5 p.m. Waterfront Park.

Call for Artists:

RiverArts Studio Tour
Registration (\$60 per artist) is open through Sept. 12 at riverarts.org. The tour is slated for Nov. 7–8

Comprehensive plan hearing

The Dobbs Ferry Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, Sept. 8, at 6:30 p.m., to get feedback on the proposed comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan will set goals for land use and zoning, and other priorities, over the next 10 years. Led by a steering committee of 13 volunteers, the process of developing the plan began in 2024, and the first public outreach event took place in March 2025.

The comprehensive plan is meant to be a document that broadly spells out the goals for the future of Dobbs Ferry and includes sections on environmental sustainability, land use and development, parking, traffic, emergency services, and open green spaces. The 186-page document will not set any specific legislation or modifications to village code, but will help guide how Village officials might look to make changes over the next decade.

The last time the Village completed a similar long-range blueprint was a vision plan that was adopted in 2010. The Sept. 8 hearing is a step toward finalizing a draft comprehensive plan, but before it's adopted there will be an additional public hearing and environmental review of the potential effects of implementation.

Deer hunting expanded

Kelley Deer Management's (KDM) bow-hunting program in Dobbs Ferry will expand to include woodland at The Masters School at no additional charge. The board of trustees approved the expansion on Aug. 11.

In March of this year, the Village agreed to permit KDM to hunt deer in Dobbs Ferry for a second-straight season, which lasts from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31 in Westchester. The \$37,500 contract includes one to two bow hunts per week, and was initially focused on the Juhring Nature Preserve and Bramley Park.

During last year's deer hunting season, KDM removed 19 deer in Dobbs Ferry, plus an additional two deer that originated in Dobbs Ferry and were removed in Irvington. This fall, Kelley will also manage deer for Irvington for the third straight year and for Hastings for the first time.

In January, Masters administration invited KDM to visit the school, where 13 white-tailed deer were observed. KDM's report states most of those deer were does, which are most responsible for population growth. The report explains that "the concentration of does suggests the property may be functioning as a source area for deer that move into surrounding neighborhoods and contribute to the broader deer population in the area."

Dobbs Ferry and its neighbors want to reduce the deer population to encourage the recovery of native vegetation and improve forest health.

— Julian Michael Caldwell



Sheri Aronowitz shifted from teaching kindergarten to leading the first pre-k class.

Pre-K starts two years ahead of State schedule



— Back to School —

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

The Dobbs Ferry School District kicked off the new school year on Wednesday, Sept. 2, by launching its first-ever pre-kindergarten class as elementary, middle, and high school students also returned.

Universal pre-K

Earlier this year the district held a lottery to pick 18 students from families who signed up for the opportunity to be part of the district's pilot preschool class. Held at Springhurst Elementary School, the class is led by Sheri Aronowitz, who has been teaching at Springhurst for 22 years and taught kindergarten for the majority of that time. Denise Shillue, who worked as a teaching assistant in one of the integrated co-teaching classes at Springhurst last school year, is the teaching assistant. Shillue previously worked at a private preschool.

Students in the program must be 4 years old on or before Dec. 1. The program follows New York State Pre-kindergarten Learning Standards with a curriculum focused on developing early literacy, mathematics, social-emotional learning, language development, and motor skills.

"While our curriculum is play-based by design, having these students in the building will bring another level of energy that Springhurst is known for," Schools Superintendent

Ken Slentz wrote the Dispatch. "With Ms. Aronowitz as the children's teacher, we have every confidence that this program will launch these students into a successful kindergarten year. Because New York State has set 2028–29 as the year when districts must provide a universal pre-K program for all interested families, this first class sets the district up well for meeting the state requirement."

In advance of the state requirement to provide universal pre-K in two years, Gov. Kathy Hochul raised the amount of state funding available for districts to provide free pre-K from \$5,400 to \$10,000 per student, per year in the state budget approved this spring.

Energy performance contract

The school district is nearing a decision on a \$10.1 million energy performance contract as part of an energy upgrade plan in the works for three years. The proposal includes the installation of solar panels on flat-roofs, solar carports, LED lighting, ceiling replacements, and infiltration upgrades to seal off holes in roofs and walls where air could leak out of buildings.

The project with Massachusetts-based contractor Energy Systems Group is expected to cost \$10.1 million over an 18-year agreement. Schools Superintendent Ken Slentz and Lisa Raymond, assistant superintendent of finance, facilities and operations, shared a report about the project during the Aug. 25 board of education meeting. The report

detailed how energy-cost savings generated by the upgrades, together with anticipated annual aid from New York State, will result in the project having no impact on taxpayers.

The district's current energy costs are about \$618,000 per year. Slentz told the Dispatch that he expects the school board to review recommended contracts before the end of the month. If approved, construction is projected to take between 12 months and 18 months to complete.

New hires

At Springhurst, Nancy Tavarez is starting her first year as the new technology teacher, providing instruction according to the state Computer Science and Digital Literacy standards. Gabrielle Roan and Mia Loran also join Springhurst this year as new elementary school special education teachers; Imani Gross, begins her first year as a school psychologist; and Kathleen Murray will teach kindergarten.

At the middle school, Lucas Frajndlich joins the staff as a new math teacher.

At the high school, Jacqueline Cerrati is beginning her first year in Dobbs as a science teacher, while Francesca Pucci-Santos is the new speech and language disabilities teacher. Richard Gelles will teach French at the high school and Maria Gabriela Balboa will teach Spanish.

The district is also in the process of hiring a new director of facilities and a math coordinator for grades K–8.

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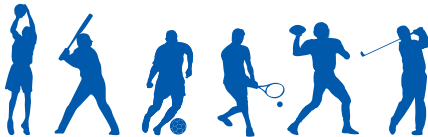
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HASTINGS

Farmers Market
 Saturday, Sept. 5, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Commuter Lot, Southside Avenue. hastingsfarmersmarket.org.

—

Local History
 Saturday, Sept. 5, 2–4 p.m. Observatory Cottage, Draper

Park, 407 Broadway. See the Hastings Historical Society's current exhibit, "The Times They Are A-Changin': Hastings in the 1960s"

—

Municipal Office Closure
 Monday, Sept. 7. In observance of Labor Day.

—

Movin' the Mind & Groovin' the Balance
 Tuesday, Sept. 8, 1–2 p.m. Hastings Public Library. Movement class for people with Parkinson's disease or balance challenges.

—

Back to School Night: "The Super Mario Bros. Movie"
 Thursday, Sept. 10, 5:30–8 p.m. James Harmon Community Center. The rec department hosts pizza and movie screening for Hillside students. Pre-registration (\$10) required at

hastingsrecreation.org.

—

School Board Meeting
 Tuesday, Sept. 9, 6 p.m. Hillside Multi-Purpose Room. Agenda available at hohschools.org.

Drop-off pilot program

The Village, school district, and police department implemented a pedestrian safety pilot program at the Farragut Complex, with new traffic and student drop-off procedures.

In a letter to the community on Aug. 28, Police Chief David Dosin outlined these changes, which will be used for morning drop-offs and afternoon pickups during September and October before being reevaluated.

The pilot program includes three designated areas to drop off their students — two new and one already in place. The first new zone is on southbound Farragut Avenue, between Hillside and Olinda avenues. The second is on Farragut Avenue northbound, inside the island and prior to the intersection of Mount Hope Boulevard.

The existing drop-off zone at Farragut Avenue, inside the island opposite Farragut Middle School, will continue to be used.

The letter states that Hillside Avenue and Mount Hope Boulevard are not designated drop-off zones.

Feedback regarding these changes can be submitted at www.hohschools.org > Our District > About Us > Superintendent's Office > Farragut Complex Traffic Plan 26-27.

New management platform

The Hastings School District has adopted Diligent Community as its new board management platform, after previously using BoardDocs. The website, which will be used to post meeting agendas, minutes, policies, and announcements, can be found at www.hohschools.org > Board of Ed > Meeting Agendas & Minutes.

Schools summer maintenance

Business Official/District Treasurer Maureen Caraballo reported on the facility maintenance work that took place over the summer at the board of education meeting on Aug. 25.

At the Farragut Complex, this included refurbishment of the bathrooms, new flooring in seven classrooms, new hallway lighting on the third floor of the high school, and a new ceiling outside the high school library. At the Farragut Middle School playground, asphalt repairs were completed as part of an insurance claim related to a broken exterior pipe that occurred during the winter.

The floor was buffed and refinished in the Cochran Gym, where the district is installing a new sound system funded by the Hastings Education Foundation.

A storm in July also required the district to conduct tree removal and related work. Nine trees at the Burke Estate and Reynolds Field fell. Three additional trees need to be removed based on the recommendations of the district's arborist.

— Amy Bochner



Genieve Holder



Karina Villalona



Lina Carolini-Cannavo

Bond projects underway as school year starts



District adjusts plan due to changes in costs

BY AMY BOCHNER

Students and educators returned to classes on Sept. 2 after a summer of new hires and progressing infrastructure upgrades.

The district welcomed several new personnel this year, including eight teachers and five administrators. Among them is Jenice Mateo Toledo, who the board of education appointed to be the district's first director of equity, opportunity, and belonging. She has worked in the Hastings schools for nearly 30 years, in various instructional and leadership roles.

Also joining the district is Genieve (Gen) Holder as the new assistant superintendent for pupil personnel services. Holder has 20 years of experience in education, including as a special education aide, teacher, and administrator. The new assistant director of special education is Karina Villalona, who spent the past 18 years in the New Rochelle Public Schools, three as director for special education and 15 as a bilingual school psychologist.

The school board appointed Lina Carolini-Cannavo as Farragut Middle School principal. She has over 20 years of experience in education, including her most recent role as principal of Mamaroneck High School. Dan Waldek, who served as the interim principal of FMS for the 2025-26 school year, is now the school's assistant principal.

In addition to new staff members, the Hastings schools also saw progress on infrastructure improvements and additions. At the Aug. 25 school board meeting, the district's treasurer/business official Maureen Caraballo shared updates on the \$38.5 million capital bond projects, comprising three propositions which voters approved in 2024.

The first phase encompasses districtwide infrastructure upgrades. The second

"We are making progress in the field, managing the budget carefully."

District treasurer Maureen Caraballo

includes additions to the Farragut Complex. The third is the installation of two new artificial turf fields at the Burke Estate and related site work.

Proposition one's first phase of exterior restoration work at the Farragut Complex has been completed. The next phase will be incorporated into the larger Farragut Complex addition project of proposition two. These additions include new classrooms, cafeteria, and main entrance.

For proposition two, an increase in the cost of steel and HVAC work caused the district to adjust its plan to bring the project back into alignment with the budget. These modifications are being reviewed to ensure the important components of the project are being preserved while managing

costs, according to Caraballo.

The project is currently awaiting approval from the New York State Education Department, which Caraballo does not anticipate receiving for another couple of months. This means that the groundbreaking for the additions will most likely take place in late spring or early summer.

According to Caraballo, work at the Burke Estate has been progressing throughout the summer. The largest component has been the pouring of a retaining wall required for the new artificial turf multipurpose field. The district made some design changes to the baseball field, which will be presented to the school board at their Sept. 9 meeting. The current field contract, Caraballo explained, was below budget, causing the district to reconsider incorporating items that were not in the original bid.

Drainage work and backfilling began this summer, and more activity will take place across the fields over the next several weeks and months. At the next board meeting, the district's architects and construction manager will provide a more detailed update on the field work, the Farragut additions, and changes to the construction drawings.

"Overall, while there are still challenges ahead, particularly related to construction costs and state approval, the bond projects continue to move forward," Caraballo's update attached to the meeting agenda stated. "We are making progress in the field, managing the budget carefully, and looking for opportunities to maximize the value of the district's investment while maintaining the overall goals and integrity of the projects."

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Saturday, Sept. 5, 2 p.m.
Irvington Public Library.
Hybrid presentation by Toni McKeen. To attend via Zoom, register: irvingtonlibrary.org.
—
Farmers Market

Sunday, Sept. 6, 9 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Main Street School, 101 Main St. For details, visit irvingtonfarmersmarket.org and follow the market on Facebook.
—
Municipal Office Closure
Monday, Sept. 7, in observance

of Labor Day.
—
Cybersecurity Awareness Program
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 7 p.m.
Irvington Public Library.
—
School Board Meeting
Tuesday, Sept. 8, 7:30

p.m. Campus Presentation Room at Irvington High School. Agenda available at irvingtonschools.org.
—
NYS DEC Public Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 10, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Irvington Public Library. Discuss the cleanup proposal

for the state Superfund site on Main Street. Public comments will be accepted through Sept. 15. Visit irvingtonlibrary.org for the link to the fact sheet.
—
9/11 Ceremony
Friday, Sept. 11, 8:30 a.m. Scenic Hudson Park.

Fire chief opposes move from Main

Irvington Volunteer Fire Department Chief David Dowd is urging the Village not to relocate the firehouse from its Main Street location as part of a coordinated plan to upgrade and/or relocate municipal facilities throughout Irvington that are in need of repair. In a letter to the board of trustees ahead of their public meeting on Thursday, Sept. 3, Dowd expressed opposition to any option that moves the firehouse to another site.

The Village is nearing the completion of a nine-month process with New York City-based Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners (BBB) to develop recommendations for several municipal facilities, including the firehouse, police headquarters, and department of public works (DPW). Options under consideration for the firehouse include relocation to the municipal parking lot at the top of Main Street, either alone or as part of a combined public safety building with the police department and village court; the same options at Broadway (Route 9) and Harriman Road; or expanding the existing Main Street facility onto an adjacent Village-owned parcel of land, which would likely require temporary relocation to a site that hasn't been determined.

Dowd, who has volunteered with the department for 30 years, including two years as chief, explained that he believes the current location is best because it is central to the community, with immediate access to surrounding areas to quickly respond to emergencies and also accessible for volunteers coming from home to gather and respond to a call. The fire department is currently staffed entirely by volunteers, and Dowd emphasized that “a concentration” of volunteers live “a few blocks” from the firehouse.

According to BBB, that firehouse is half the recommended size to support its volunteers and newer firetrucks, which leaves little room for volunteers to maneuver around the trucks. The facility also lacks a decontamination room to remove potentially carcinogenic material from equipment. In his letter, Dowd pointed out what he believes are significant issues with the other proposed options, including the elimination of parking spaces and potential access problems during storms.

Last month, board members of the Fieldpoint One Condominium community also wrote a letter to the village board in opposition to relocating the firehouse to the municipal parking lot at the top of Main Street. They argue that building a firehouse or larger public safety building there would increase traffic, and as a result negatively impact safety for the Fieldpoint community. The letter also lamented the fact that construction would call for the removal of trees and topsoil in the area.

— Julian Caldwell



Students arrive at Dows Lane Elementary School on Sept. 3.

High school shifts to fewer and longer classes



BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Students throughout the Irvington School District returned to classes on Sept. 3, with the high school debuting a new scheduling system that includes longer and fewer class periods. The changes are an attempt to provide deeper learning and relieve stress for students, and better prepare them for college schedules.

High school block schedule

Irvington High School is debuting a

block schedule that features four 80-minute class periods and an hour-long shared lunch period. Unlike the previous schedule, which required students to take all eight of the same 43-minute courses every day, students will take half of their classes on alternating days. Seeking out a new scheduling formula has been a main focus for Schools Superintendent Mara Ratesic, now in her third year leading the district.

“By teaching in 80 minutes [intervals], we hope to see a wide variety of pedagogical shifts to include lecture, full class instruction, small groups, individualized attention,

and re-teaching,” Ratesic told the Dispatch. “You have a far better chance of implementing all those models within an 80-minute block than you do within a 43-minute block.”

The block schedule was approved in December after a committee of students, parents, teachers, and administrators studied alternative schedules being used by other school districts. Beginning in the spring of 2025 and continuing through this past school year, the school district partnered with Stanford University-affiliated program Challenge Success to survey the high school

Continued on page 19



1776 and 1876 in 2026

—
Storyteller Jonathan Kruk reads the Declaration of Independence during an 1876 garden party hosted by the Armour-Stiner Octagon House on Sunday, Aug. 30. The party followed an event at Memorial Park, called “Capitol for a Day,” that celebrated Aug. 31, 1776, when members of the New York State Committee of Safety met at the Odell Tavern in Irvington. The committee was the state’s temporary governing body.

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TaSH Farmers Market
Saturday, Sept. 5, 8:30 a.m.–
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9/11 Ceremony
Sunday, Sept. 6, 10 a.m.
Patriots Park.

Municipal Office Closure
Monday, Sept. 7, in observance
of Labor Day.

Bilingual Storytime
Wednesday, Sept. 9, 10:30 a.m.
Warner Library. Children's
author Susie Jaramillo shares
her latest book, "La Vaca Lola,"

in celebration of Hispanic
Heritage Month.

Matinee Movie: "The Choral"
Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2–4 p.m.
Warner Library.

**Bilingual Crafting for
Grades 6–12**

Thursday, Sept. 10, 6–7:30
p.m. Warner Library. Reg.
required at warnerlibrary.org.

**Planning Board Work
Session**
Thursday, Sept. 10, 6:30 p.m.
Village Hall.

School Board Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 10, 7 p.m.
Central Office Building, 200
N. Broadway. tufsd.org/boe.

**Special Screening:
"Fahrenheit 451"**
Friday, Sept. 11, 2–4 p.m.
Warner Library.

Students recognized in environmental writing contest

Two best friends rescue a baby puffin tangled in plastic waste on a beach in Iceland. After freeing the bird, they bring it home and then to a wildlife rescue center. The girls turn their experience into a larger effort to educate children about the dangers of plastic, and grow up to establish an animal hospital dedicated to healing wildlife harmed by such pollution.

The story, "Rescue on the Beach," by Dobbs Ferry Middle School students Nefeli Antonogiannakis and Celeste Pawlowski, was a winner of the Hudson Valley Writers Center's 2026 Writers Express Youth Environmental Creative Writing Contest. The contest challenged Westchester students in grades 6–12 to explore the environmental issue they believe will be most important to the future.

The winners also include three students from Hastings.

In her poem "Untitled," Hastings High School senior Sienna Cambria contrasts the beauty of a clean ocean teeming with fish and turtles with a beach overwhelmed by human trash. The poem calls on people to stop littering and protect marine life.

In "Eleven," Hastings High School senior Gabby Shore recalls realizing, at age 11, that society encourages affection for some animals, such as cats and dogs, while ignoring the suffering of others, like chickens and cows, raised for food.

"And once I saw the light / I never looked away," the poem ends.

Hastings junior Rosalie Dunn won for "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?" In the poem, she reflects on her changing perception of the future as climate change threatens the world she grew up in. While her younger self imagined a happy adult life filled with friends, pets, and a garden, her older self struggles to picture any future at all. She closes with an urgent call:

"There is no time like the present. Act now, and act fast. This earth is all we have."

A total of six pieces were chosen as winners, including a piece by Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School sixth-grader Colin Mui, "A World Full of Tears and Heat," and "Changes" by Eastchester seventh-grader Defne Akinici.

The winning contest entries are published on the center's website, writerscenter.org.

The winners will read their work at a free celebratory event on Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. at the Hudson Valley Writers Center, located at 300 Riverside Drive in Sleepy Hollow. The event is open to the public.

— Laura Schiller

Got news?

Email staff writer Laura Schiller at
laura@rivertownsdispatch.com



Dan Larkin shifted from serving as assistant principal of the high school to director of technology for the school district.

Upgrades to facilities welcome students



— Back to School —

BY LAURA SCHILLER

Construction is reshaping the Tarrytown School District this year, with students spread across the district's four elementary schools as renovations continue. The arrangement is temporary, with grade configurations set to shift again as work moves from one building to the next.

The changes are part of an \$86 million bond project, approved by voters in 2023 and supplemented by about \$10 million in state funding, which is bringing major renovations and upgrades to the district's aging buildings.

In the Sleepy Hollow schools, some of the biggest changes are inside the classroom, and, at W.L. Morse School, throughout the building itself.

At Morse, first-graders started the school year on Sept. 2 with half of the building renovated, offering a first look at one of the most significant transformations in the district's multiyear construction project.

The side of the building in use includes a renovated cafeteria, gym, and classrooms, along with HVAC improvements and a new courtyard for outdoor learning and play.

Construction will continue in the other half of the building during the school year. The district expects the entire school, inside and out, to be renovated over time. By the 2027–28 school year, Morse is expected to accommodate both first- and second-grade students.

There are also a few new faces in the

administrative offices at Sleepy Hollow's secondary schools this fall.

Sleepy Hollow Middle School welcomes Maria Almeida as assistant principal. Almeida comes to the district with more than 13 years of experience in education, having worked as a bilingual teacher, instructional leader, and most recently as assistant principal and acting principal with Southern Westchester BOCES in the Rochambeau Therapeutic Support Program.

Sleepy Hollow High School welcomes Mary Berat as assistant principal. Berat comes to the district from the Nyack pub-

"I encourage all our scholars
to dream big."

Superintendent Ray Sanchez

lic schools, where she served in multiple roles, including social studies department chair, since 2003.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve this community and excited to get to know the students, staff, families, and community partners," Berat posted on LinkedIn.

Berat succeeds Dan Larkin, who moves into the new position of district director of technology. Larkin was recognized last spring with the Innovation in Education Award from the Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association for his contributions to education and innovation.

At the middle and high schools, students

may not notice many physical changes — unless they look up.

Several middle school classrooms have new "drop" (suspended) ceilings designed to improve classroom acoustics and reduce echo. The school building also has a new roof, with the district planning for solar panels in the future.

The more noticeable changes may come in the form of new opportunities. At the high school, students can now take AP Cybersecurity and a dance course to earn physical education credit. The middle school is adding new courses in personal finance and family and consumer science.

In addition, middle school students can take elective career-focused STEM courses in the new "Project Lead the Way" curriculum, including "Flight and Space," "Building for the Future," and "Design and Modeling."

Athletics are expanding, too, with girls' flag football and boys' varsity swimming added to the district's offerings. The swim team uses the pool at the EF Academy for practices and competition.

The new courses, athletic programs, administrative leaders, and ongoing building improvements signal a school year of change for students, even if not all those changes weren't apparent on day one.

"I encourage all our scholars to dream big. I'm excited about the year ahead and what we can accomplish together as a school community," Schools Superintendent Ray Sanchez told the Dispatch. "I believe that by working together — schools, families, and our community — we will make this a truly special year for our children."

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p.m. Warner Library. Reg.
required at warnerlibrary.org.

School Board Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 10, 7 p.m.
Central Office Building, 200
N. Broadway. tufsd.org/boe.

**Waterfront Concert:
Anthony Giaccio & the
Assortments**
Thursday, Sept. 10, 7–9 p.m.
Pierson Park.

School buildings in transition as class schedule resumes

BY LAURA SCHILLER

For students heading back to school this week in Tarrytown, the biggest change may be where they find themselves heading.

This year, pre-K and kindergarten students are at John Paulding, first grade is at W.L. Morse, second grade is at Tappan Hill, and third through fifth grades are at Washington Irving.

For many students, John Paulding School is where the school journey begins — and this year, it has a new leader. Mayerlin Strippoli takes the helm as principal after serving as assistant principal at Sleepy Hollow Middle School for two and a half years. She has been with the district in instructional and leadership roles since 2004.

At Tappan Hill School, the students are moving up — but they're not going anywhere. The first-graders who filled the classrooms last year return this fall as second-graders. In previous years, Tappan Hill housed first grade, so while teachers may be new, many of the faces in the hallways will be familiar.

The unusual arrangement is the result of the ongoing renovation of W.L. Morse School, which serves first- and second-graders. The Morse building was divided into two sections for the renovation, with one side completed last year and work now moving to the other. Keeping students at Tappan Hill for a second year provides continuity while the district uses the school as swing space.

Tappan Hill students also returned to a building with significant improvements. This summer, the school received a new roof with solar panels and new windows, following interior work completed last year that included new ceilings, kitchen improvements, and plumbing and electrical upgrades.

At Washington Irving Intermediate School, students in grades 3–5 returned to find a new interim principal, Valerie Hymes, who brings more than 30 years of experience in education, including 16 years as principal of Harrison Avenue Elementary School in Harrison. She retired from that district in 2025.

Washington Irving students also return to some of the most visible changes in the district: a new turf field and bleachers.

Construction is still underway, including work on an addition to the building that will continue throughout the school year. The district is coordinating with its construction manager to keep the work separated from school activities and to minimize disruptions.

"We're taking every precaution to ensure

Continued on page 17



Principal Mayerlin Strippoli hopscoches through a hallway at the John Paulding School.

Strippoli makes a full-circle return to John Paulding

— Back to School —

*Former kindergarten student
becomes new principal*

BY LAURA SCHILLER

Becoming the new principal of John Paulding School after 22 years in the Tarrytown School District is a homecoming of sorts for Mayerlin Strippoli.

Strippoli first came to John Paulding as a kindergartener in 1981, after immigrating with her family from the Dominican Republic. She was there for about a year before her family moved. In 2004, she returned to the district as an educator, hired by the principal — Michelle Milliam — who had welcomed her as a child.

"I came to school here fresh off the island," Strippoli told the Dispatch. "So this is all very nostalgic for me."

Strippoli began her career in the district as a dual-language teacher, helping launch the program and writing its curriculum. She later taught fifth grade at Washington Irving before settling into middle school science, where she taught generations of students — including some she has since been invited to see get married.

Most recently, she spent two and a half years as assistant principal at Sleepy Hollow Middle School.

Now, as she welcomes about 200 students to John Paulding for the new academic year, Strippoli is focused on making their families feel that they belong.

"I've always felt like it was my duty to

advocate and liaison she wishes her parents had.

"I just want to be able to give them a voice and make them feel comfortable, and welcome them in," she said.

Strippoli started creating opportunities for that connection, including a late-summer "Book and a Blanket" family event featuring a picnic, music, crafts, snacks, and bilingual storytelling. Inside the school, she wants students to see their own work and faces reflected on the walls and to have license to explore and play.

Most of all, Strippoli wants children to know they belong and to associate John Paulding with positive experiences from the moment they walk through the doors.

"I want them to use their senses to connect this experience to everything positive. I want them to come in and say, 'Wow, this is what it smells like. This is what it looks like. This is what it feels like. And this is what it sounds like,'" she said. "And the sounds are going to be laughter. They're going to see everyone smiling."

**"I want them to use their
senses to connect this
experience to everything
positive."**

Principal Mayerlin Strippoli

make sure that I communicate and empower parents with their kids' educational journey," she said. "My parents didn't have that."

As the child of immigrants, Strippoli had to advocate for herself in school. While she remembers Milliam reaching out to her, her parents did not have the same kind of guidance or support to navigate the school system on their child's behalf. Strippoli sees her new role as an opportunity to be the

Got news?

Email staff writer Laura Schiller at
laura@rivertownsdispatch.com

The Agenda

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Live Rock Band: Rain or Shine

ARDSLEY

9 p.m. / No cover charge. Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road. Reservations encouraged. smtavern.com

“Landscapes in My Mind”

IRVINGTON

10 a.m.–5 p.m. / Free. Martucci Gallery at Irvington Public Library, 12 S. Astor St. The September exhibit features oil paintings by Michael Amato. irvingtonlibrary.org

Dave Stryker Quartet

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$35, \$30 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Summer Saturdays: “Global Grains”

SLEEPY HOLLOW

11 a.m.–3 p.m. / \$18, \$15 for ages 18–25 and 65+, \$13 for children. Philipsburg Manor, 381 N. Broadway. Cooking demonstrations, crafts, and samples. Purchase timed-entry tickets at hudsonvalley.org

Murder and Mayhem Tour

SLEEPY HOLLOW

8–10 p.m. / \$50. Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, North Gate, 540 N. Broadway. For ages 18+. Offered every Saturday in September. Register at visitsleepyhollow.com

Waterfront Walking Tour

YONKERS

10:30 a.m. / \$6, \$3 for seniors and students. Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site, 29 Warburton Ave. Learn about the daylighted Saw Mill River and Yonkers’ Hudson River waterfront on a 1-mile walk. philipsemanorhall.com

“Totally Trees” Tour

YONKERS

5–7 p.m. / \$25. Untermyer Park and Gardens, 945 N. Broadway. Register at untermyergardens.org

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Outdoor Live Music: Lord Tenor

DOBBS FERRY

2–5 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com

Landscape Ramble

TARRYTOWN

10 a.m. / \$20. Lyndhurst, 635 S. Broadway. Walking tour of the historic estate. Also Sept. 13 and 27. Timed-entry tickets required. lyndhurst.org



“Landscapes in My Mind,” an exhibit of oil paintings by Michael Amato, is on view this month in the Martucci Gallery at the Irvington Public Library.

Jazz Vocalist Gabrielle Stravelli

TARRYTOWN

4 and 6 p.m. / \$25, \$20 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Open Jam Session

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / Free. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. Hosted by longtime Hastings resident and jazz pianist David Janeway and his trio. jazzforumarts.org

History Tour: Beyond the Walled Garden

YONKERS

11 a.m. / \$15. Untermyer Park and Gardens, 945 N. Broadway. Purchase tickets online. untermyergardens.org

Virtual History Lecture

YONKERS

2 p.m. / Free. Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site, 29 Warburton Ave. Kieran J. O’Keefe discusses his new book, “Suffering for the Crown: The Hudson Valley Loyalists and the Violence of Revolution” via YouTube Live. Register at philipsemanorhall.com

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8

Comedy Open Mic

HASTINGS

8 p.m. / One-drink minimum for performers. Divino’s Speakeasy, 524 Warburton Ave. Presented by the Dobbs Ferry Public Library. Intended for ages 18+. Sign-up starts at 7:30.

Melissa Etheridge

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / \$98–\$307. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9

Bilingual Storytime

TARRYTOWN

10:30 a.m. / Free. Warner Library, 121 N. Broadway. Children’s author Susie Jaramillo shares her latest book, “La Vaca Lola,” in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. warnerlibrary.org

Matinee Movie: “The Choral”

TARRYTOWN

2–4 p.m. / Free. Warner Library, 121 N. Broadway. warnerlibrary.org

Holocaust Stories and Recipes

TARRYTOWN

5–6:30 p.m. / \$15–\$45. Shames JCC, 371 S. Broadway. Author June Hersh discusses her book, “Food, Hope and Resilience: Authentic Recipes and Remarkable Stories from Holocaust Survivors.” shamesjcc.org

Special Film Event

TARRYTOWN

7 p.m. / \$11, free for members. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. Screening of “Jurassic Park” with pre-show trivia and cocktails. tarrytownmusichall.org

Sunset Yoga

YONKERS

6–7 p.m. / \$22. Untermyer Park and Gardens, 945 N. Broadway. Purchase tickets at untermyergardens.org

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10

Outdoor Live Music: Chris & Sal

DOBBS FERRY

6–9 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com

History Talk

DOBBS FERRY

6:30 p.m. / Free. East Lawn of the Keeper’s House, 15 Walnut St. Robert Lee gives an overview of the Old Croton Aqueduct at 6:30 p.m., followed by Char Weigel presenting “Life During Wartime: Caught in the Crossfire of the Neutral Ground” at 7. Register at aqueduct.org

Latin Jazz Trio

DOBBS FERRY

7–9:30 p.m. / No cover charge. Mirabella Cocina Latina Restaurant & Bar, 1 Hamilton St., in Rivertowns Square. Featuring Paul Carlon on tenor saxophone, Alex “Apolo” Ayala on bass, and Chembo Cornie on congas. mirabella.cocina.com/calendar-dobbs-ferry

Science-on-Hudson Lecture

IRVINGTON

7 p.m. / Free. Nevis Science Center, 136 S. Broadway. Learn about the subatomic world and see a live demonstration of cosmic rays. Register at nevis.columbia.edu

Sunset Soiree

TARRYTOWN

6–8 p.m. / \$55. Lyndhurst, 635 S. Broadway. Featuring live music and hors d’oeuvres to celebrate the new Paula Hayes Garden at The Overlook. lyndhurst.org

Waterfront Concert:

Anthony Giaccio & the Assortments

TARRYTOWN

7–9 p.m. / Free. Pierson Park, 238 W. Main St. Presented by the Tarrytown Recreation Department. tarrytownny.gov

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11

Break the Silence

ARDSLEY

9 p.m. / No cover charge. Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road.

MorDance Open Rehearsal

DOBBS FERRY

6:30–8 p.m. / \$20. 145 Palisade St. (lower level). See what the women-led dance company is working on and talk with the artists. Register at mordance.org

Special Screening: “Fahrenheit 451”

TARRYTOWN

2–4 p.m. / Free. Warner Library, 121 N. Broadway. warnerlibrary.org

Bill Mays Trio

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$35, \$30 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Classies

Submissions are due by 12 p.m. Monday for that Friday's paper. To purchase a classified notice, go to market.rivertownsdispatch.com/classies



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE STUDENTS WHO FINISHED THE DOBBS FERRY LIBRARY SUMMER READING CHALLENGE!

Miles A., Jackson J.,
Rowan A., Margot K.,
Virginia B., Willa K.,
Claudia B., Stella N.,
Beckett C., Martha P.,
Eliot C., Liliana P.,
Valerie C., Frank S.,
Aria F., Joseph S.,
Hetty G., Christopher S.,
Io G., Nicholas S.,
Holly H., Michael S.,
Jade H., Cassian W.,
Gemma H., Shepherd W.,
Deyton H., Mary W.,
Amari H., Nora W.

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Share your news — either here in Announcements or on the Photo Wall: market.rivertownsdispatch.com/classies

PHOTO WALL



BIRTHDAY

Betty Perkins of Dobbs Ferry celebrated her 101st birthday on August 28 with family and friends



PUBLIC NOTICES

VILLAGE OF IRVINGTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES SEPTEMBER 09, 2026 WORK SESSION CANCELLED

VILLAGE OF IRVINGTON PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Village of Irvington Board of Trustees Work Session scheduled for, September 9, 2026 at 7PM at Village Hall, 85 Main Street, Irvington is cancelled.

Katie Bugna, Clerk-Treasurer
Irvington, NY
August 31, 2026

Tarrytown back to school

Continued from page 15

the safety of staff, students, and the community," Schools Superintendent Ray Sanchez told the Dispatch.

The work at Washington Irving is part of a larger transformation underway throughout the district, with new windows,

improved ventilation and accessibility, LED lighting, and solar installations being phased in as the project moves from building to building.

For students, families, and teachers it promises to be another year of adjustment, with some temporary arrangements and continuous glimpses of what the schools will look like when the work is complete.

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BY KIDS



Dispatch



FOR KIDS

New Dinosaur Discovery: The Amazing Doolysaurus

BY SAMMY W.-P., 8

Did you know that more dinosaurs have been discovered in the last thirty years than in the 200 years before that? A new dinosaur was even discovered this year in 2026. The Doolysaurus was found in South Korea. It was a small omnivore that was a baby when it was alive. It was a fuzzy dinosaur that walked on two legs and had feathers. Scientists named it after the famous South Korean cartoon Dooly the Little Dinosaur because it was similar to the character in the cartoon. Isn't it awesome that there is a new dinosaur in 2026?

HOW TO BE A GREAT BIG SISTER

by Jimena B., 8



When your mom is pregnant:

1. Help your mom stand up.
2. Help your mom get ready.
3. Help your mom or dad build things for your baby sister like the crib.
4. Talk to your baby sister in your mom's tummy.
5. Help your mom pick up things from the ground.
6. Help your mom with everything.

The day your baby sister is born:

1. Hold your mom's hand when she is giving birth.
2. Talk to your baby sister.
3. Hold your sister.
4. Sing lullabies to your sister.
5. Help your mom put your baby sister to sleep.
6. Be very quiet when your baby sister is sleeping.
7. Greet her: say "hello, hi, welcome to the family, little one, welcome."

When your baby sister is months or days old:

1. Be a great role model to your baby sister.
2. Give your baby sister some milk from a bottle.
3. Try to make your baby sister laugh.
4. Change your baby sister's diaper, even if you don't want to.
5. Help your mom shower your baby sister.
6. Help your mom get your baby sister to sleep.
7. Stay with your baby sister when your mom has to do something.
8. Take care of your baby sister.

When your sister is 1-3 years old:

1. Teach your sister things that you know.
2. Help your sister grab things from high shelves.
3. Help your sister spell things.

It is a big responsibility to be a big sister. You will be a great big sister.

FALL READING PICKS

SPIES, SOCCER STARS & FAIRY TALES!



THE LAND OF STORIES

by Chris Colfer

The Land of Stories is a six-part book series about siblings, Alex and Conner Bailey, who go on adventures into a fairytale book. Alex is determined to learn magic, so she stays behind in the fairytale world. Meanwhile, in the real world, there are very strange and surprising things happening. Eventually, Alex and Conner team up again and go "into" Conner's creative writing stories. This book series is full of thrilling adventures. It doesn't make sense at first, but then, piece by piece, or book by book, it comes together. Each book leaves you on a cliffhanger, making you want to read more. Ages 8-12

—Quinn C., 10

SPY SCHOOL

by Stuart Gibbs

Spy School is an amazing action-packed book series about a kid named Ben Ripley who gets recruited to a top secret CIA training academy and goes on many adventures. This series will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Ages 9-12 —Beckett C., 11

THE ACADEMY

by T.Z. Layton

This series is about a soccer player, Leo Doyle. He gets scouted and joins an English Premier League summer camp to try out for the London Dragons team. He has problems along the way, makes friends, enemies, and learns lessons.

Ages 7-13

—Beckett C. 11

THE LITTLE
Dispatch



— LOCAL DISCOURSE —

What's your favorite spot in your village?

Compiled at the Tarrytown Sleepy Hollow Back to School Bash at Patriots Park on Wednesday, August 26.



Norah
("Playing with my mom at the farmers market")
4 years old, Tarrytown



Theo
9 years old, Tarrytown



Benji
11 years old, Tarrytown



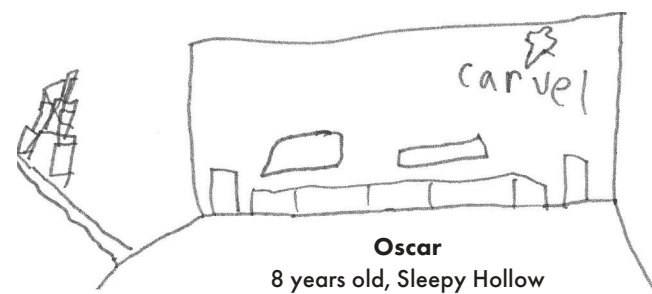
Lillie
12 years old, Tarrytown



Frieda
6 1/4 years old, Tarrytown



Mason
4 years old, Sleepy Hollow



Oscar
8 years old, Sleepy Hollow

Irvington back to school

Continued from page 11

student body. The process revealed that 81% of IHS students feel health-related stress symptoms from school pressures, while 7% fell fully engaged in class.

Having fewer classes is meant to be less overwhelming for students, who will focus more deeply on fewer subjects on a daily basis. Administrators also support the scheduling because it more closely mirrors the type of schedule students will encounter in college. The new block schedule includes the "unit lunch" period that is the same for all students and faculty, and encourages everyone to take a break at the same time. The Challenge Success survey revealed that nearly 10% of students would forgo their lunch periods to fit in another class or schoolwork.

The schedule will also include "X" blocks twice a week to allow students to meet for clubs or drop in on teachers for office hours.

School days will continue to start at 7:50 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. All academic requirements to graduate will remain the same.

Meszaros Field & Oley Track

Renovations have been completed at Meszaros Field and its surrounding Peter K. Oley Track at the middle/high school, including permanent field lights added in late 2025. A new turf field was installed, and the track resurfaced, this summer.

The track and field are used by high school athletic teams for games and practice, and are open for the public outside of school hours, when not in use by the school.

"It's absolutely beautiful," Ratesic raved to the Dispatch. "The athletes who have already been to campus for preseason were very excited about it. The students love the way that it looks."

Ratesic is especially excited to see the field in use for games during homecoming week, Oct. 2-8. In the past, the district brought in temporary lights for the occasion.

"They [the lights] allow us broad flexibility on when we can practice and when we can play," Ratesic said. "So not only for our practices, but as well as when we host other teams for contests, we have a lot more

"They [the lights] allow us broad flexibility on when we can practice and when we can play."

Superintendent Mara Ratesic

flexibility because we can go longer with the addition of the lights."

New staff

Kelly Seibert will replace Carol Stein as the assistant superintendent for business

and operations, effective Jan. 1. The board of education hired Seibert on Aug. 25. Stein will retire after 10 years in Irvington. Seibert currently serves as assistant superintendent for business and management services for the Byram Hills Central School District.

Main Street School started the school year by welcoming new art teacher Ella-Mae Spinali, science teacher Mya Millan, school psychologist Stephanie Tucciarone, and special education teachers Marielle Coffey and Anastasia Creighton.

At the middle school, French teacher Michael Days, drama teacher Chad Beckim, STEAM teacher Abe Winter-Beard, and library media specialist Teresa LaBianco all joined the staff.

Finally, the high school welcomed special education teachers Christa Kollarus and Alessandra Sopot, STEAM teacher Griffin Brown, math teacher Michael Broder, science teacher Wendy Bosco, and social studies teachers Lilah Katz and Thomas Sorensen.

Dispatch Podcast

Continued from page 3

Hollow as a tax write-off.

We're starting to see businesses get established in Sleepy Hollow. We have the social media sensation, the Village Confectionary. We have the North River Oyster Bar that opened recently. And we know of a couple other businesses that are opening. We're very excited for the Strand Theater to become operational after being vacant for so many years...

It is a conundrum, because I've met with

so many people that live in Sleepy Hollow and actually want to open businesses here, but it's taking some concerted effort to do a little bit of matchmaking to encourage landlords to make the investment, to bring their properties up to code, and then have places for entrepreneurs to locate their new businesses.

I think we're turning the corner, and it's not just Sleepy Hollow, it's not just the Rivertowns, it's a national and probably global phenomena. Too many people are getting stuff delivered to their house instead of going downtown to frequent the shops. It's

a chicken and the egg. We have to have nice shops and restaurants for people to want to go to and then encourage more walkability and bikeability and have more people frequent our downtown. I mean, we have so many tourists come in the fall. We just want places for them to spend their dollars.

RDP: You represent one of the most diverse villages in all the Rivertowns. You've got slightly more than 50 percent of the population being Latino. You also have a significant Republican-voting population. Latinos can also vote Republican,

but you have a lot of different perspectives. How do you balance that?

Mayor Hsu: At the local level, we all pretty much want the same things. And so I would rather focus on the 90 percent we agree on, which is we want our streets to be safe, we want our kids to be able to play in neighborhoods, and we want our kids to be able to walk downtown and hang out with their friends. And we want thriving businesses. So even though there's a lot of diversity, I always look at the upside of diversity. I always look at how can we do more things together.

Sports

EDITED BY ROB DIANTONIO

Horsemen look to reload after run to state title game

FOOTBALL
PREVIEW

BY ROB DIANTONIO

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Sleepy Hollow raised the standard last season. Now the Horsemen have to show they can sustain it with key players returning, but many others stepping into starting roles.

The Horsemen went 12-2, captured the Section 1 Class B championship with a 27-14 win over Westlake and advanced to the state championship game before falling to Monroe 34-0.

Coach Anthony Giuliano's team graduated 15 seniors from that historic run, including Class B State Player of the Year Brayden Richardson and all-state receiver Gilbert Onwe.

Richardson, now playing at the University of Rhode Island, was the centerpiece of the offense and capped his Sleepy Hollow career with a Section 1 single-game record 446 rushing yards and five touchdowns in the state semifinals.

Replacing that production will take more than one player, but the Horsemen do return an established playmaker at the most important position. Senior quarterback Jeremiah Bowen earned all-section honors and now returns with 14 games of experience. Bowen had previously been used as a skill-position player before taking over at quarterback last fall.

"He pretty much got two seasons in one last year, playing a new position," Giuliano said. "Coming into the season, we feel comfortable with him. He's seen it all before. He just played against the best teams in the state."

Bowen's athleticism makes him a threat as both a passer and runner, and his importance extends to the other side of the ball. He played cornerback last season and will move to safety, where Giuliano believes his instincts and football IQ make him one of the Horsemen's top defensive players.

Senior Olin Keough, sophomore Leon Miranda, and senior Michael Variano are in the mix at running back once Variano returns from injury.

Jack Marvin, a senior captain, gives Bowen an experienced target at tight end after starting last season. Luca Waldman, Adrian Castillo, and Anthony Lopez are among the receivers stepping into larger roles, while Charlie Farbman and Dean Nelson will contribute at fullback.

"We're molding them into weapons," Bowen said. "Everybody works hard, so I'm not really too worried about losing old weapons from last year because we have new, developing weapons."

The other established centerpiece of the team is senior all-state lineman Abel Perez Rosario, who will anchor both sides of the line and is the center on offense.

"Abel is a game-changer on the line," Giuliano said. "He's super-quick off the ball. You have to know where he is at all times, and he just brings an intensity that you don't really see all the time."

Perez Rosario will be surrounded by a largely rebuilt offensive line after Sleepy Hollow graduated four starters from that unit. Sophomore Jacob Cabrera has impressed with his size and strength, while Trevor Kaplewicz, Isaiah Tavares, Ryan Reid, Jadon Thomas, and Jossuel Cece are among the players competing for roles.

"We are very aggressive," he said. "We have a lot of kids that still work, but I feel confident in them. Everything they do, they're doing with consistency and they're showing up every day."

Perez Rosario will also anchor the defensive front, with Marvin and Farbman among the players on the edges. Nelson will have a role at inside linebacker, and the eventual return of Variano should provide another boost to the defensive line.

Bowen, Perez Rosario, and Marvin will serve as captains for a team that understands last season's success has also created greater expectations.

Giuliano wants his players to embrace that rather than run from it.

"Pressure is a privilege," he said. "If you have pressure on you, it means you're doing something right or have done something right. So we want pressure. That means we're putting ourselves in a good position. There's definitely a standard, but it's just a matter of getting these younger guys to catch up to the guys that experienced it last year. Once that happens, I think we have something special."

The Horsemen are proud of a season that included their first sectional championship in 47 years and took them all the way to the state final, but Bowen knows this team cannot rely on what the previous group accomplished.

"A lot of people have high expectations of us from last year, but we have a whole new team," Bowen said. "I still expect us to get there because we know what it takes to win, but I put last year in the past and it's on to this year."

That is also Giuliano's message. Rather than making another trip to the state final the immediate measuring stick, he wants the Horsemen to put themselves in position



Sleepy Hollow senior quarterback Jeremiah Bowen picks up yards at a recent scrimmage.
Photo by Rob DiAntonio.

to win games late.

"We acknowledge it. We're proud of it. We own what we did," Giuliano said. "We also realize that's now something that doesn't seem so unattainable. We know we can have that type of success. We just have to work for it."

The Horsemen were scheduled to open the season by hosting Byram Hills on Sept. 3.

"We're extremely proud of last year, and we made history," Perez Rosario said. "Now we're on to the next season and the next chapter of the book. We've got to lock in and do what's best for the team."

DOBBS FERRY

Dobbs Ferry has spent each of the last two seasons knocking on the door of a Section 1 championship; for a senior class that has grown up around the Eagles' football program, the goal is to finally break through it.

Dobbs Ferry went 7-3 last season and advanced to the Section 1 Class C championship

game before suffering a 56-6 loss to Bronxville. It was the Eagles' second consecutive appearance in the section final, and coach Joe Cox believes that disappointment helped drive his players throughout the offseason.

"I think anytime you end short of your goal, that's going to fuel you," Cox said. "I think it fueled our guys to have a big offseason and spend a lot of time in the weight room. Now, as this season begins, you've kind of put that away and you're focused on what's ahead."

Dobbs Ferry returns seven starters, including a pair of all-section seniors in quarterback Jackson Kearns and fullback Killian O'Connor. Kearns is back for his second season as the starting quarterback and returns as a captain for the second-straight year. After an impressive junior season statistically, Cox has noticed another jump from Kearns physically.

"Jackson had a really big offseason in the weight room," Cox said. "I think he's noticeably bigger and stronger this year. He had a great year last year. But knowing him for as long as I have, he just wants to win football games. He doesn't care about all that stuff."

Kearns believes having a full varsity season at quarterback behind him has made a significant difference entering his senior year.

"I think one of the things that I've improved on the most is being able to manage the game," Kearns said. "It was one of the hardest parts of last season, especially with it being my first year playing quarterback at the varsity level. Having a full season of experience under my belt helps me feel much more comfortable going into this year."

O'Connor gives the Eagles another proven option in the backfield. Senior Camilo Cruz, junior Tommy Radomski, and junior JC Mazziotti are also competing for roles in the backfield. "They're three very hard workers, three guys that did a lot in the offseason," Cox said. "We're excited for them."

Juniors Connor O'Meara and Peter Kilroe are expected to step into larger roles at receiver, while senior tight end Andrew Zende returns as a three-year starter and team captain. Cox praised Zende's blocking, toughness, and decision-making while also noting his ability to contribute in the passing game.

Senior Matt O'Leary moves from center to left tackle, with senior Kola Rukai next to him on the left side. Junior Ian Foley takes over at center, sophomore River Rowan is slated to start at right guard, and junior Andrew Radomski is at right tackle.

Kearns, O'Connor, O'Leary, Rukai, and Zende will serve as the Eagles' five captains.

O'Leary, Rukai, and Rowan are among the defensive linemen, along with junior Caleb Lopez. Tommy Radomski, Foley, and

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Sports

FALL SPORTS PREVIEW

— PART 2 —

Teams have high hopes as season gets underway

BY ROB DIANTONIO

VOLLEYBALL

ARDSLEY

The Panthers, coming off a 16-4 season that ended with a 3-0 loss to Rye in the Class A sectional semifinals, return a deep group as they look to make another post-season run.

Coach Dave Ponterio enters his 34th season leading the varsity and believes his team has the pieces to contend in a challenging Class A schedule.

Junior Sophie Young, a setter and opposite hitter, headlines the returning group after being named all-conference last season. Senior outside hitter Serena Emanuele, who was all-league last year, also returns and will serve as a captain along with senior middle hitter Morgan Macri and senior libero Addison King.

Other key returners include senior outside hitter Cassandra Sassalos, sophomore outside hitter Lilianna Davis, junior libero Katherine Cai, junior outside/middle hitter Zaniya Bell, junior defensive specialist/setter Sophia Pecora, and junior opposite hitter Claire Herrod.

"We have depth at all positions, and we have players that can play multiple positions," Ponterio said.

Ardsley also adds several newcomers, including sophomore outside hitter Madison Polanco, freshman middle blocker Jillian Bucci, junior opposite hitter Edona Lumaj, senior defensive specialist Joelle Reid, and junior utility player Lilya Merola.

With plenty of experience and versatility, Ponterio believes the Panthers have the potential to make another deep postseason run if they continue to develop as a group.

"If they listen to their coach, do the work, come together as a cohesive group, play like a team, support one another, improve their volleyball skills, condition and strength, they will go deep into sectionals," Ponterio said. "We will have our hands full with a Class A schedule."

One of Ponterio's biggest points of emphasis will be improving defensively.

"Defense wins championships," he said. "I want this group to make a concerted effort to work on their defense, which includes a confrontational block and a quick, sound back court."

Ardsley opened the season with a 3-0 loss (12-25, 22-25, 17-25) to host Horace Greeley on Sept. 1. Emanuele (10K), Bell (4K, 10D), and Young (15A) led the team.



Ardsley junior Sophie Young was all-conference last season. File photos by Rob DiAntonio.

IRVINGTON

Irvington enters the season with a new voice leading the program as Leano Monsanto takes over after spending the previous four years coaching the Bulldogs' JV team. Monsanto inherits an Irvington squad that finished 8-11 last season and will lean on a group of experienced returners as the Bulldogs look to take a step forward.

Senior setter Paige Swift and senior outside hitter Chloe Swift headline the returning group and will serve as captains along with Piper Keltz. Junior middle blocker Alice Kamin and junior outside hitter Alice Schneider are also expected to play important roles.

Monsanto believes one of Irvington's biggest assets will be its ability to move players around the court.

"Our versatility is a major strength,"

Monsanto said. "Most of our players can play multiple positions, which gives us flexibility and allows us to adapt during matches."

The Bulldogs will also add several newcomers, including junior libero Brooke Lee, freshman middle blocker Blake Glazer, and freshman defensive specialist Eliza Stern.

Monsanto wants his first varsity team to establish a foundation that can help the program throughout the season and beyond.

"Our biggest goal is to build great habits on and off the court," he said. "We want to work hard, support each other, and continue to grow throughout the season."

One of the biggest areas of emphasis will be developing the Bulldogs' ability to respond positively to momentum swings.

"Mental toughness will be a big focus for us," Monsanto said. "We need to learn to push through adversity, stay composed,

and keep fighting when things get difficult."

BOYS' SOCCER

DOBBS FERRY

Dobbs Ferry will have a much different look this fall as the Eagles try to build on last season's run to the Class B sectional semifinals. The Eagles finished 10-7-2 before falling to Albertus Magnus 2-1 in overtime in the semifinals, but graduated 13 seniors from that team.

Dobbs will also have a new head coach, John Saitta, who takes over a young roster with just five returning players and two returning starters.

Senior left wing Chase Colyer will be one of the players Saitta counts on to lead the way. Colyer, an all-league selection last season, is a captain and one of the Eagles' biggest scoring threats. "He has a knack for the ball," Saitta said. "All-around stud of a player."

Senior center midfielder Conor Woodley also returns and will serve as a captain. Saitta praised Woodley's ability to see the field, deliver the ball, and contribute defensively. Junior right winger Rassul Assanov brings speed and strong footwork, while sophomore midfielder Felipe Betancourt should help dictate play and give the Eagles another weapon on corners and set pieces.

Despite losing so much experience, Saitta is optimistic about a large group of newcomers. Freshman striker Evan Todd could immediately contribute to the attack, while senior midfielder and captain Yonatan Cohen brings speed, aggressiveness, and the ability to contribute on both ends.

Junior center back Caleb Rekedal, junior right back James Vuletic and senior left back Jonas Serulle will be among the players tasked with rebuilding the defense. Junior winger Kyle Hung should provide additional speed and scoring ability on the outside.

The Eagles will also be young in goal with eighth-grader Elijah Burns. "He is super athletic and plays well above his age," Saitta said. "He uses his feet well and he is only going to keep getting better."

Saitta believes the Eagles' offense can be one of their major strengths.

"We shouldn't have any trouble scoring," he said. "Our defense should be solid and a strength for us. We also have some depth with some young guys who will only get better as the season grows."

The biggest question will be how quickly an inexperienced group adjusts to varsity competition. Saitta believes the Eagles can challenge for their league and win games in the sectional tournament if they steadily improve throughout the fall.

"We are young, but we have talent and

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Sports

*Football preview**Continued from page 20*

senior Russell Shealy are in the mix at inside linebacker, while O'Connor and Zendel man the outside linebacker spots.

Kearns and O'Meara are at safety, with Cruz and Mazziotti at cornerback. O'Connor will also handle punting duties, while Zendel is expected to handle kickoffs, field goals, and extra points.

That returning experience will be important in what figures to be a competitive Class C. Bronxville remains in the classification after winning last year's title, while Pleasantville drops down from Class B.

The Eagles were scheduled to open against rival Hastings on Sept. 3, but that game was canceled and Dobbs Ferry was unable to find a replacement opponent. Instead, the Eagles will have to wait until Sept. 10 to play their first game, when they host Rye Neck.

Once the season finally begins, Cox expects Dobbs to need contributions throughout its lineup rather than relying solely on established players such as Kearns and O'Connor.

"Football's the ultimate team game," Cox said. "Our successes are going to come as a unit, and we need contributions from everybody. You don't beat good football teams and well-coached programs on the back of one or two people."

The Eagles' ultimate objective remains unchanged: return to the Section 1 championship game for a third consecutive season and this time leave with the title. For this particular senior class, doing so would carry additional significance. Many have been associated with Dobbs Ferry football since they were children, first as youth players and even water boys before eventually becoming varsity starters.

"This senior class has a lot of youth football guys in it, a lot of lifers, so to speak," Cox said. "They've been at it a long time. It's a very tight group. They've been close friends for what seems like forever. I think they love wearing the jersey and representing the program. I think it means a lot to them. They love playing games at Gould Park and they're just excited and ready to go."

ARDSLEY

There will be a new system and a new head coach at Ardsley this fall, but the Panthers expect the standard that has been established within the program to remain the same.

Phil Treglia takes over for longtime coach Dan DiFalco after Ardsley went 6-3 last season and reached the Class B sectional semifinals, where the Panthers fell to eventual state finalist Sleepy Hollow. Treglia has previous coaching experience at Hackley, Woodlands, Stepinac, and Iona Prep, where he played quarterback in the 1990s.

Although Ardsley graduated a large senior class, Treglia inherits several experienced players as the Panthers look to remain a contender in Class B.

Senior Jack Calkins will take over at quarterback after contributing at several positions last season. Calkins has spent the summer learning Treglia's new shotgun, no-huddle offense, and is a dual-threat.

"He has taken the leadership role at quarterback since we started in the summer, and I think gradually he's gained confidence in himself," Treglia said.

Senior captain Tristen Roberts will provide another major piece in the backfield after receiving carries behind Ahmady Dolcine last season. Roberts will also have an important role at linebacker. "He's a big, explosive back," Treglia said. "He's smart, powerful, and he's got speed. It's a nice complement to Jack."

The Panthers have several options to get involved in the passing game. Senior Tommy Bennett can contribute out of the slot, while senior Dominick Carpenito provides size on the outside. Junior Xavier Estime brings another athletic and speedy option to the receiving group.

Treglia hopes to take advantage of that depth by spreading the field and getting the ball into the hands of different playmakers. "We do have a lot of athletes, so we're trying to get as many kids involved as possible," Treglia said.

Up front, senior captain David Tselnik returns at guard and should anchor the offensive line. Senior Adrian Vizner and junior Nathan Weinstein give the Panthers good size at tackle, while Joey Perillo will handle the center position.

Ardley should also have experience in the defensive front. Senior captain Jackson Rosenfeld will play on the defensive line and at offensive guard, while Tselnik, Weinstein, and Vizner are expected to have significant defensive roles.

Roberts will be part of the linebacking corps, and the Panthers have several two-way athletes available in the secondary. Bennett, Carpenito, Calkins, and Estime could all see time there, while junior Jonah Goldberg is another player Treglia expects to contribute.

Treglia believes the Panthers can be balanced across all three phases of the game.

"I think we are well-rounded, even in special teams," Treglia said. "We're going to be a competitive team. Not perfect. We're going to make some mistakes. But I think the kids have a good attitude."

Calkins, Roberts, Rosenfeld, and Tselnik will serve as captains for a team attempting to continue Ardsley's recent run of success while adjusting to a new head coach and offensive system.

Rather than focusing immediately on matching the accomplishments of previous teams, Treglia wants the Panthers to improve steadily and become more comfortable with the changes.

"We have to get better," he said. "We have to get acclimated to the system one day at a time. I think if we can build every day, we'll be competitive and ready to go when our league season kicks off."

Ardley would get an immediate test when opening the season on the road against

Valhalla on Sept. 3.

"The kids have a good attitude," Treglia said. "There's a nice camaraderie. We've got a good team spirit, and we're looking forward to getting on the field and showing everybody what we have."

IRVINGTON

With James Madison being in his second season as head coach, Irvington has the advantage of greater familiarity, an experienced group of senior leaders, and expectations of taking another step forward.

The Bulldogs finished 4-4 last season but came up short of qualifying for the Class B sectional playoffs. With a drop to Class C this fall, Madison hopes his team can not only reach the postseason but put itself in position to host a playoff game.

Sophomore Julian Peres will take over at quarterback after gaining valuable varsity experience last season. Peres was pressed into action for several games and impressed Madison with his ability to handle the offense. "Julian understands the expectations and the offense," Madison said.

The Bulldogs also bring back several experienced seniors, led by offensive guard and linebacker Josh Tatz. Tatz led Irvington in tackles last season and will serve as one of the team's captains. "He's a solid player with a great understanding of the game," Madison said.

Senior Adriel Martinez, a safety and running back, joins Tatz as a captain after emerging as one of the Bulldogs' top defensive players last season. Junior wide receiver and defensive back Bobby Estrada is the third captain.

Senior Zach Surchin returns at running back and will contribute on special teams as a kick and punt returner. Madison expects Surchin, who received significant playing time last season, to have an increased impact.

Senior Vontre Harris will take on an important two-way role at linebacker and tight end, while senior running back, linebacker, and kicker Adrian Aybar returns after missing time last season with an injury. Madison said Aybar enters the season stronger and mentally prepared to make an impact.

Estrada will be another important two-way player at wide receiver and defensive back. "He'll come ready to play every day," Madison said. "He has good skills and understands the game."

Irvington will also look for contributions from several newcomers. Seniors AJ Sloyer (WR/DB) and Harrison Malakoff (TE/DE), junior Jarrett Ourman (WR/DB), and sophomores Kevin Canton and Brayden Callahan give the Bulldogs additional options.

"Another strength is having players come back after a year off that understand the game of football and want to make an impact," he said.

After narrowly missing the postseason a year ago, improving on last season's .500 record and breaking through into the Class C playoffs are among Irvington's primary objectives. Madison has set his sights even

higher, hoping the Bulldogs can earn the opportunity to host a postseason game while having players receive individual recognition through all-league and all-section honors.

"The expectation for this season is to compete," Madison said. "If we all come together, fill in and play our roles, we will do well."

For Madison, how they respond to it will go a long way toward determining whether Irvington can have a successful first season in Class C.

"We have a tough schedule and we will play with heart and determination just like all my other teams do in the school," Madison said. "We're young and we need to learn from one another."

Irvington will open the season on the road against Edgemont/Blind Brook on Sept. 5.

HASTINGS

Hastings entered the football season already dealing with limited numbers. A handful of injuries quickly made the situation even more difficult. The Yellow Jackets, who combine with Greenburgh and Clark Academy, began with a 25-player roster but were soon down to 18 eligible players. That prompted Hastings to pull out of a preseason scrimmage and cancel its scheduled Sept. 3 opener against Dobbs Ferry.

Hastings is now scheduled to open its season at home against Edgemont/Blind Brook on Sept. 10.

"Our priority has been, and remains, providing our student-athletes with the opportunity to have a meaningful football season while making sure that they can compete as safely as possible," athletic director Drew Wendol wrote in a letter to the community.

Wendol stressed that there has never been an intention to fold the football program. Instead, the decision to cancel the early contests was designed to give injured players additional time to recover while the program works to increase participation.

With only 18 eligible players, many of the Yellow Jackets would be required to play significant snaps on offense, defense, and special teams with limited opportunities for rest or substitutions.

"This decision was made to protect our student-athletes while we continued working to increase participation and determine whether we could safely sustain the season," Wendol said.

The numbers present an added challenge for a Hastings team moving up to Class B this fall based on enrollment. The Yellow Jackets went 3-6 last season and lost to Putnam Valley in the Class C quarterfinals.

Despite the concerns, coach Chris Crooms does have an experienced senior group to build around. Hastings has 11 seniors on its roster, including five senior captains. Lucas Seelye (WR/S) earned all-conference honors last season and headlines the group. Avi Rothstein (QB/L), William Tenthoff (QB/K/LB), Aidan Hansen (OL/FB/DL), and Maximus Hesquijarosa will also serve as captains.

Sports



Fall sports preview

Continued from page 21

some depth,” he said. “As long as we continue to get better, we will be a tough team to beat later in the season.”

IRVINGTON

Irvington established itself as one of the stingiest defensive teams in Section 1 last season, allowing just five goals while putting together an 11-2-4 record. But after a strong regular season ended abruptly with a 1-0 loss to rival Dobbs Ferry in the Section 1 Class B quarterfinals, the Bulldogs enter this fall with a much different-looking roster.

Irvington graduated 10 seniors from last year's team, leaving fourth-year head coach Chris Lombardi with the task of incorporating several newcomers into significant roles. The Bulldogs, however, still have an accomplished group of returning players to build around, led by senior midfielder Griffin Warner.

Warner, a four-year varsity starter and two-year captain, earned all-section honors last season and was Irvington's leading scorer. He is also committed to continue his soccer career at Tufts University.

“He is one of those players that you are extremely fortunate to get the opportunity to coach,” Lombardi said.

Warner is one of three senior captains, joining Navin Vasudev and Joseph DeNardo. Vasudev, a three-year varsity player, will be particularly important as the Bulldogs attempt to maintain the defensive identity that made them so difficult to score against last season. “It's his dedication, IQ, and capabilities which have contributed greatly to our low goals-against-percentage last year,” Lombardi said of Vasudev.

DeNardo, a forward who found the back of the net multiple times last season, gives the Bulldogs flexibility with his ability to provide a tactical advantage and has shown plenty of growth, Lombardi noted.

Senior midfielder Dennis Sasso is another player expected to take on a larger role. A talented option on the wing, Sasso should help Irvington replace some of the offensive production lost to graduation.

Senior defender Josh Diamond and junior midfielders Hagai Frechter and George Miles round out an experienced returning group.

Sophomores Conner Gredick, Caesar Blanco, and Giacomo Fante are among the newcomers on defense. Sophomore midfielder Paxton Kitcharayothin also joins the varsity group, along with freshman defender/

Dobbs Ferry senior Chase Colyer.

midfielder Alex Ahn and freshman goalie Ethan Otto.

“We have new guys stepping into big roles, and we can see already that they are getting comfortable quickly and learning to adjust to this level of play and learning a new system,” Lombardi said.

The Bulldogs want to remain disciplined while relying on a group that Lombardi believes has the soccer intelligence to make adjustments throughout a match.

“Their commitment to each other and the process,” Lombardi responded when asked about the team's greatest strengths. “They possess a high soccer IQ and they take ownership of their actions and are able to analyze their play and make adjustments.”

Last year's quarterfinal exit left Irvington without the postseason finish its regular-season performance appeared capable of producing. This year's group will try to use the foundation established by that team while developing its own identity.

For Lombardi, the objective isn't necessarily to duplicate last year's team. It's to take what worked, integrate a new group around an accomplished senior core, and continue moving the program forward.

The goal, Lombardi said, is “to build off of what we accomplished last year” while continuing to focus on the program's core principles of “resiliency, grit, and perseverance.”

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Sleepy Hollow enters the season with high expectations after going 9-5-3 last fall and capturing a league championship before bowing out in the first round of the

Class A sectional tournament. Coach JP Ospina enters his second season leading the Horsemen and returns an experienced core, particularly in the midfield.

Junior forward Samuel Quezada Pesantez was one of Sleepy Hollow's top goal scorers last season and gives the Horsemen a creative presence in the attack. He has played varsity soccer since his freshman year and is coming off a strong summer.

Juniors Denis Suqui and Nico Barbosa return in the midfield. Suqui has been a varsity player since his freshman season, while Barbosa earned all-league honors last fall.

“Nico makes our midfield tick,” Ospina said. “He is calm and composed on the ball and a class player who can pick out a pass while also doing the defensive work.”

Senior goalkeeper Jason Espinoza and senior defender Dylan Robles will serve as captains. Espinoza is a three-year starter who Ospina considers one of the area's top goalkeepers, while Robles emerged as a physical presence on the back line last season.

Junior defender Duncan Barron, an all-league selection last year, is another important returner. Junior defender Andrew Lucchetti and sophomore midfielder Cameron Maroney are among the newcomers expected to contribute.

Ospina views the midfield as the Horsemen's biggest strength, with several experienced players returning.

“A somewhat young midfield, but filled with varsity experience,” Ospina said. “Our core midfielders are returning this year as juniors, so we expect them to have an even better season than they did last year.”

After an early postseason exit last fall, the Horsemen are setting their sights considerably higher this time around.

“The goal of the season is to win the sectional tournament,” Ospina said. “We expect to be a competitive team and be in the conversation to win it all. We also expect to win the league this year.”

GIRLS' SOCCER

IRVINGTON

Irvington will feature a young roster this fall as the Bulldogs look to improve on a 5-9-3 season that ended with a loss to Rye in the first round of the Class A sectional playoffs. Coach Pat DiBenedetto enters his 13th season at the helm and will lean on a core of experienced midfielders to help lead a roster that includes several underclassmen.

Senior midfielders Ruthie Liang and Clara Stern and junior midfielder Alexis Im will serve as captains. Senior forward Addi Miller also returns to provide experience in the attack.

Junior forward Naomi Maltz and junior defender Zoe Sobol are other key returners, along with sophomores Emma Ecklund and

Skylar Coyne. Freshmen Shea Pressman and Parker Pressman also return after gaining varsity experience last season.

The Bulldogs will add a large group of newcomers. Senior defender Rebecca Kronick and junior defender Bayla Mohan bring some additional upperclassmen to the roster, while sophomores Mila Barry, Gigi Okun, Abigail Souza, and Mila Spektor will look to contribute.

Irvington has even younger players who could play roles, including eighth-graders Taylor Coyne, Lexy Krapp, Ella Krieg, Emma Newman, and Emmy Waldman, along with freshmen June Gore and Eleanor Schultz. Sophomore Emma Reilly joins Krieg as a newcomer at goalie.

DiBenedetto sees the team's willingness to improve as one of its biggest strengths. “We have a young team that's eager to work hard, adapt, and grow,” he said.

After finishing below .500 last season, the Bulldogs are focused on making progress in 2026.

“Our goals are to be competitive in our league and play cohesively as a team,” DiBenedetto said.

DOBBS FERRY

Dobbs Ferry took a step forward in Mark DeGaetano's first season as head coach. Now, with several key players returning — including one standout who missed all of last year — the Eagles hope that experience can help them make an even deeper postseason run.

The Eagles finished 7-6-5 last fall and advanced to the Section 1 Class B semifinals before their season ended with a 1-0 loss to Blind Brook. DeGaetano enters his second season with a roster led by seniors Amra Klinecivic and Claire Turner and junior Phoebe Walker.

Klinecivic's return could provide a significant boost. An all-section selection as a sophomore, she missed last season but is back for her senior year and will serve as one of the Eagles' three captains. “We're excited to have her back,” DeGaetano said.

Turner gives Dobbs an experienced presence defensively. She earned all-section honorable mention recognition last season and will again anchor the Eagles' back line.

Walker, the team's third captain, is coming off a strong sophomore season. The junior earned all-league honors and delivered several important goals throughout the year.

The Eagles will also look for sophomores Bridget Turner and Ivana Vuletic to take another step after both gained valuable varsity experience as freshmen.

Rather than placing the emphasis solely on matching or surpassing last season's semifinal appearance, DeGaetano wants the Eagles focused on steady progress.

“We're excited to get the ball rolling and hopefully build some momentum early,” he said. “We know the season is a long grind, so our focus will be on improving each day, competing, and building chemistry.”

EDGE-ON-RIVER

SCENE



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