



## Hello Millbrook Families!



A heartfelt thank you to all of you who came out to vote on this year's school budget. This budget came at a critical time in education as our students spent much of their school year learning either remotely or in a hybrid model.

Your approval means we can move forward with our plans to launch a Pre-Kindergarten program for four-year-olds, offer an enhanced Summer Scholar program, and retain existing programs at all levels. See details on the Pre-K and Summer Scholar program in this newsletter. The staff thanks you for your support and confidence in our ability to deliver a quality educational opportunity to all our students. We look forward to a great 2021-2022!

**ONWARD!! Laura, Your Proud Superintendent of Schools**

## Enrollment open for new Pre-K program



Elm Drive Elementary School Principal Michael Setaro shows how the school's library will be divided into two classrooms to house the district's preK program in the fall.

Parents of children who will be four by Dec. 1, 2021, have an opportunity to begin their child's education early through the District's Pre-Kindergarten program this fall.

"Research has shown that 90 percent of a child's brain is developed before age five and students enrolled in early education are twice as likely to be ready for school by age five," according to Elm Drive Elementary School Principal Mike Setaro, whose school will house the program.

They are also:

- Four times more likely to graduate from a college program
- 20 percent less likely to repeat a grade

Rather than build a program that depended on federal funding, Millbrook decided to add the money into its budget, starting with two, 15-student classrooms in the fall.

"We planned to allocate funds and staff to the program. We built it with sustainability in mind," Setaro said.

The full-day program will run from about 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and offer a full curriculum based on New York State's Next Generation Standards. "There will be exploratory learning, social skills development, organized play, exploring nature, and the

local community along with time for lunch, recess, P.E., music and art," Setaro said, adding, "Teachers will control the design of the learning activities and you'll see lots of hands-on learning."

"There's another benefit to the program that can't be measured by tests. It allows us to develop a relationship with the child and become familiar with them and their family and begin a partnership. It creates a very trusting and fluid conversation about the child's progress so we can entertain a talk about intervention, enrichment, and any other support service," he said.

The school's library is moving so the existing space can accommodate the program. A moveable wall will separate the classes or create a joint space. Pre-K will have its own lunch and recess area and the school will group grades into hubs to provide separation.

As for transportation, it will be provided for students who are four, but parents will have to provide transportation for three-year-olds as by law they must be in car seats.

Registration for the program ends June 16. If there are more than 30 registrants, a random lottery will be held. To register, visit <https://ny50000204.schoolwires.net/Page/282>

## Summer Scholars program grows

Millbrook Central School District is pleased to announce enrollment in the Summer Scholars is open and the program is growing.

"This year, because of additional funding and the impact of the pandemic, we are expanding it to offer literacy and numeracy skills to all K-12 students," Caroline Hernandez-Pidala, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Pupil Personnel Services, said.

"We are talking about school loss due to circumstances beyond our control and its impacts on education," she said. "We are doing our best to remediate as soon as possible to get the students back to grade-level expectations."



The program will be run out of one building to consolidate functions. It will operate in-person with a remote option if needed and classes will be held Monday-Thursday.

"We will use results-based practices and it will be responsive to the needs of students," she said.

Hernandez-Pidala received Board approval to double the staff, including adding a dedicated summer coordinator because of the expansion. About 90 students are enrolled. Parents interested in having their child attend should call the Office of Curriculum and Instruction/Pupil Personnel Services at (845) 677-4200 x1107.

## Reminder: Students' schedule changes during last week of school

School staff will have a week of professional development to help them prepare for the 2021-22 school year during the last week of school, resulting in some schedule changes as previously announced. Students will attend for a half-day in the mornings June 21-24 and will be off June 25 for a Superintendent's Conference Day.

During the staff sessions in the afternoons and the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>, staff will have the opportunity to learn about schooling loss, social-emotional learning, and transitioning students and the entire educational community back to in-person learning.

There will be sessions on trauma-informed practice by Ramapo for Children (which helps instructors teach to students who may have been impacted by the pandemic), curriculum mapping and assessment, co-teaching models, and information about child abuse.

"We want to make sure our teachers have the training they need to be strong, confident, and ready for the new school year. We're looking forward to seeing all of our Blazers back in September," Superintendent Laura said.



# Public gets chance to see safety plan in action

## Committee begins annual review

School Resource Officer Robert 'Michael' Freer escorted Millbrook voters into Millbrook Middle School to vote May 18 as an incident in the nearby community activated the District's Safety Plan, sending schools into lockout.

State police called the District to inform them of a situation involving a woman who had barricaded herself in a home with a knife. They recommended the District implement a lockdown.

Superintendent Laura Mitchell and District administrators notified building administrators of the situation and ordered the lockdown just prior to the polls opening at noon.

Freer met with Superintendent Laura Mitchell and the District's attorney and determined it would be OK to allow voters in one at a time to vote. "I'm just controlling entry," Freer said.

Once the District was notified the situation was contained and would likely have no

impact on the schools, Mitchell ended the lockdown.

The lockdown occurred during a rare time when members of the public were expected to be inside the schools and when the safety committee was beginning its annual review of the District's Safety Plan. But, the process for how to handle the situation was nothing new to administrators or students.

"Under the plan, there are 12 drills required annually that give staff and students a chance to experience every level of response", said Brian Fried, the Assistant Superintendent for Business, Finance, and Operations, and the Safety Committee Chair.

The responses are:

- Shelter-in-place keeps students and staff inside the building they are in, for example if there is a tornado warning.
- Hold-in-place limits movement of students and staff during a short-term emergency, such



School Resource officer Robert 'Michael' Freer and Superintendent Laura Mitchell discuss the May 18 lockout situation with New York State Police via cell phone outside the middle school.

as if someone falls in the hallway and needs an ambulance. Hallways need to be kept clear.

- Evacuation gets staff and students out of the building.
- Lockout doesn't allow anyone into buildings, eliminates travel between buildings, cancels all outdoor activities and secures the buildings and grounds.
- Lockdown is reserved for an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. Doors are locked, students and staff get out of sight and are instructed to remain quiet.

The committee meets five times a year and evaluates the plan, examines drill responses, and addresses any issues that arise during the school year.

Changes to the plan for the coming year will include the addition of a secure vestibule at Elm Drive Elementary School and Millbrook High School. "We've already submitted the plans to New York State Education Department for approval," Fried said. These are the last of the vestibules to be installed.

This year, the District upgraded its security cameras.

Otherwise, there are few changes being considered for the 2021-22 school year.

Once the District Safety Plan is established, it is provided to each building's emergency response team, which develops a plan for the location.

The public hearing for the District Safety Plan is tentatively scheduled for July. You can read the existing [safety plan here](#).



Safety plans also include pandemic-related issues. Here, student artwork greets voters, leading them the one-way into the polling place.

Fried is joined on the committee by District administrators, law enforcement, fire/emergency services, teachers from each school, parents at the elementary and secondary levels, a custodial worker and the District's safety consultant from Putnam-Northern Westchester BOCES. This year, Fried wants to bring back student representation, which was difficult during the pandemic.

## Graduation plans revealed for Class of 2021 ceremony

Millbrook High School's graduation ceremony will be more traditional this year. It is returning to the District Athletic Complex Friday, June 25 at 7 p.m. with rehearsal taking place at 10 a.m. on Thursday, June 24 with a rain date of Saturday, June 26 at 10 a.m.

"I surveyed our families to seek their input as to what should be prioritized in designing possibilities for our Commencement Ceremony to honor our Class of 2021. The responses weighed heavily for a traditional setting on our Millbrook Athletic Complex," Principal Eric Seipp said.



Graduates will be allowed to have up to six guests attend, something Seipp said is due to the new guidelines as previous guidance would have limited them to two each.

"Celebratory events have already begun. On May 7, the school held a Senior Sunset

event for students at the field where students could play games, watch the sunset and make s'mores. Senior prom was June 4. The senior trip to Six Flags is scheduled for Friday, June 11, and the senior class Field Day is Monday, June 14 with a rain date of June 15," Seipp said.

"I'm so happy that they were able to participate in their clubs and activities, attend prom, a senior trip, and have a traditional graduation. They deserve it!" he said.

## Let Millbrook PTO fundraiser help save you money

You can help the Millbrook PTO and save money at the same time by purchasing an Ultimate Discount Card. Featuring discounts at 28 local and area merchants, the card is good for a full year (until June 1, 2022) and there are no limits - use the discounts as often as you like. Each card is \$12 and if you buy 10 you can get one free.

Send your name, address, the number of cards you want accompanied by a check for \$12 per card to Millbrook PTO) c/o Dawn Tompkins, 43 Alden Place, Millbrook, NY 12545.

