Urban Suburban



Spring 2022

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Participating Districts:

- Brighton
- Brockport
- East Irondequoit
- East Rochester
- Fairport
- Hilton
- Honeoye Falls-Lima
- Penfield
- Pittsford
- Rochester
- Rush-Henrietta
- Spencerport
- Webster
- West Irondequoit
- Wheatland-Chili

From the Director's Desk

Greetings Parents/Guardians and Students,

For over 56 years Urban-Suburban continues its commitment to voluntarily reduce racial and social imbalances in schools. We are strong because of your level of parental involvement and commitment to educational excellence. On March 16, we completed our final parent group meeting of the school year and hope you found the virtual format and meeting content beneficial. We appreciate your partnership and encourage you to take your involvement to new levels by volunteering: on the



Urban-Suburban Scholarship Committee in May; Award planning for next year; on a program or district fundraiser; and sharing your talents on district committees. We are made for great things and this edition will share some of those highlights and important upcoming events. Let's spring forward together!

Ubuntu—"I am because we are." We are Urban-Suburban!

Urban-Suburban Scholarship Committee members needed!

The development of this year's Urban-Suburban Scholarship Selection Committee is underway and we would like to invite you to participate!

We are seeking volunteers, who have students in grades 9–11, to serve on the committee. One to two parent volunteers are needed from each district. In addition, a high school principal or assistant principal and a counselor make up the committee.



In 1985, the Urban-Suburban Program commemorated its 20th anniversary by establishing a scholarship award to honor the achievements of program graduates. During the first two years, the Reidman Corporation of Rochester donated \$3,000. At the end of the two-year period, Urban-Suburban parents urged that the scholarship award be continued. Subsequently, scholarships are awarded each year with monies provided through voluntary contributions of annual family dues and program fundraisers. Since the inception of the scholarship fund, program parents have awarded nearly \$322,000 to program graduates.

The committee will meet on **Saturday, May 7, 2022 from 9 a.m.–2 p.m.** at Urban-Suburban, 11 Linden Park Rochester 14625. There are 86 seniors slated to graduate, but not all seniors will apply for our scholarship. Some may receive full scholarships, some enter the military, and others go directly into the workforce. The conference room has been reserved until 2 p.m., however, once all applications have been reviewed and selections have been made you are free to leave.

Breakfast and Lunch will be served. If you are interested in participating, please reply directly to **Felicia Smith@boces.monroe.edu**.

Transportation Updates

The Rochester City School District will continue to provide transportation for Urban-Suburban students

Throughout this school year, RCSD has been exploring solutions to its driver shortages. Last month, the task force decided to pause conversations surrounding the option of eliminating transportation for students enrolled in schools or programs outside of the district.

This means RCSD is committed to providing transportation for students in Urban-Suburban, Charter, and Private Parochial schools for the 2022–23 school year. It will remain a part of the RCSD's work session discussions.

Crossing guard added to Sutherland/Monroe intersection

Students attending the Pittsford Central School District will now be greeted by a crossing guard on their journey to school.

Through a collaboration with the district, the village, and the town, a permanent crossing guard will be stationed at the Sutherland and Monroe intersection.

This permanent position will have someone in place from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Warm weather reminders for school bus safety

- Obey and respect the bus driver at all times.
- Respect the property and personal rights of others while on the bus.
- Board the bus in an orderly manner, go immediately to your seat and buckle your seat belt for safety.
- Please do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Keep your hands and feet out of the aisles.
- Remain seated at all times while on the bus.
- Use low voices when speaking to each other while on the bus.
- Do not bring electronic items on the bus (such as cell phones, game boys, etc.).
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Do not use profanity, offensive language, or demean fellow students.
- Report problems *immediately* to the bus driver and contact Urban-Suburban: 249-7045.
- Have an enjoyable ride!



Masking Guidelines

On March 2, the New York State Department of Public Health removed the mask mandate for congregate settings, which included schools.

Our area districts transitioned to mask-optional settings, but there are certain times a mask is still required.

For example, if a student rides on public transportation, they must follow the rules in place of that public transportation system.

If a student is home sick with COVID, the state requires them to wear a mask during days 6–10 of their isolation period. If a student is exposed to COVID, the state suggests they get tested and wear a mask for 10 days.

Many districts have worked with area health officials to update their COVID management plans. Please review your district's specific plan if you have questions.

Attention Class of 2022!

The U-S Scholarship Application is now open

The Urban-Suburban Scholarship package has been mailed to all program seniors and their parents, and a printable version is available at monroe.edu/us-scholarship.

All completed application packages must be received by our office no later than **noon on Thursday**, **April 7**, **2022**.

Due to COVID and safety, do not bring applications to Urban-Suburban Office, please mail.

If you have any questions, please call our office at **585-249-7045**, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Grad Cap Decoration

In years past, Urban-Suburban has hosted a graduation picnic to celebrate our seniors. With ongoing challenges with COVID, we are creating a new event this year.

We are donating Graduation Cap bags to our 86 graduating seniors. We hope to get enough donations to allow every student in the Class of 2022 to decorate their caps in a way that reflects their personality and goals for the future.

Be on the lookout for further information!





Target

Monroe #1 BOCES Educational Foundation, Inc.

for donations to Urban-Suburban graduating seniors!

Save the Date!

You are invited to the Urban-Suburban Virtual Award Ceremony, scheduled for **Thursday, June 16**. The event will be held virtually. A link will be sent to families ahead of time so you can share with others.

We look forward to honoring the hard work and dedication of our students!

Alumni Spotlights

Urban-Suburban alumna publishes children's book

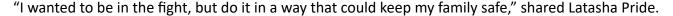
Latasha Pride is not only a graduate of the Urban-Suburban program, she is also a team member—working as an Education Specialist with our families. And now she can include the title of "Published Author" on her resume.

To watch the story behind her story, visit Facebook.com/UrbanSuburbanProgram

It was 2020 when the Brockport grad was living in Nashville. At the time, she was quarantined in a hotel room with her husband and newborn twins.

"It was just after the death of George Floyd...I just felt like everybody was protesting and talking about all the things that were happening in the world. I felt like I couldn't do that

because I had our four-month-old babies, I was dealing with post-delivery complications.



Throughout the stay in that hotel room, a story kept playing in her head—the story of a little girl learning about the protests happening around her.

"I wrote it out in notes on my phone. [My husband] read it and he was like, 'this is amazing. What would you call it?' And I said, "This is Why We Protest."

Her husband encouraged her to make the story come to life.

"So, I drew rough sketches of each page and we went through different illustrators that gave us some samples. We found one we really liked and worked with her."

The husband and wife team created Pride Family Publishing, with the goal of launching the book for Black History Month.

They got their first copy just a few days after Latasha's birthday.

"It was just breathtaking, to hold it. And then my daughter grabbed it and ran off to the kitchen with it. We started reading it and talking about how it felt," recalled Latasha.

It is a story she can now share with other families.

"These are going to be the things going in their history books. These are going to be things that they're going to have to find an adult in their family and write about how they felt when they were in quarantine or how they felt when protests hit.

"I want them to have a way to have that conversation, and want them to be able to have it in a healthy way with them to understand the reasons behind it."

The couple hopes to expand on the Why We series, which you can check out by visiting WhyWeSeries.com



Alumna lends voice to Geneva's unheard voices

An Urban-Suburban alumna brought the untold stories of Geneva residents to the stage, in the first production from the "From Beyond" series to focus solely on the African American community.

Samari Brown graduated from Pittsford Mendon, joining the Urban-Suburban program as a child. Her academic career then brought her to Hobart and William Smith Colleges.



Source: HWS Theatre. This image shows Samari mirrored with Nancy Lucas Curlin, a Black educator, who she played in the show.



Source: HWS Theatre. This picture shows Samari presenting the drafts of the piece, sharing them with a small audience and receiving feedback.

This past summer, Samari worked as a summer research assistant, conducting archival research with her peers in the program. Their work culminated in a production called "From Beyond: Geneva's Unheard Voices".

The "From Beyond" series is a partnership between Historic Geneva and the Hobart and William Smith Colleges Theatre. The production Samari helped to create, write, produce, and perform in is the third version from the series and, as the HWC Theatre describes it, was a "theatrical walking tour depicting the lives of un-and underrepresented African American people who lived in Geneva, NY."

The historic figures included in the production "were athletes, war heroes, educators, and entrepreneurs who lived and worked in Geneva, NY in the 19th Century."

Fellow students and community actors joined Samari and her fellow research assistants as actors, tour guides, design and production members, and stage managers.

Alumni in Action

We want to jumpstart the alumni association. Every single student who graduates from our program has an incredible story to tell, we would love for you to share yours.

If you are an alumni of Urban-Surburban, please reach out to Director Felicia Smith through email. Provide your name, contact information, the school you attended and the year you graduated.

As we build up our alumni database, we hope to have a more active alumni association.

Thank you to the Parent Advisory Council for a successful Food Drive!

Our heartfelt appreciation to the Urban-Suburban Parent Advisory Council for organizing a successful food drive.

From your generous donations, the Urban-Suburban Parent Advisory Council was able to provide a number of food items to the Irondequoit Community Cupboard.

We appreciate all those who donated and our amazing PAC members for making this possible.



Student Spotlights

Middle schooler's artwork featured in statewide exhibit

Flor (Jelani) Ayala-Pound is a student at Barker Road Middle School, in the Pittsford Central School District.

Her teacher, Katie Brown, selected Jelani's beautiful drawing of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to submit to the RIT student show. From there, Jelani's artwork was selected from schools across New York State to be featured in the State's 2022 Exhibition.

The NYS Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Student Art & Essay Exhibit can be viewed online or on the Empire State Plaza North Concourse.

Each year, the New York State Education Department honors Dr. King's memory by inviting schools to submit student art and essays that reflect Dr. King's teaching. Schools submitted original artwork illustrating Dr. King's Six Principles and Steps of Nonviolence or essays celebrating Dr. King's birthday.



The entire exhibit can be viewed by visiting https://empirestateplaza.ny.gov/nys-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-student-art-essay-exhibition.

Board of Education honors Pittsford Pride recipients

Calkins Road Middle School eighth-grade student **Carlasia Clark**, who is in the Urban-Suburban Program, was one of nine Pittsford Central School District students to receive the Pittsford Pride Citizenship Recognition Award during the November 16, 2021 Board of Education Meeting. She was selected by her school for demonstrating excellent citizenship and positive leadership. Students are chosen for this award three times a year.



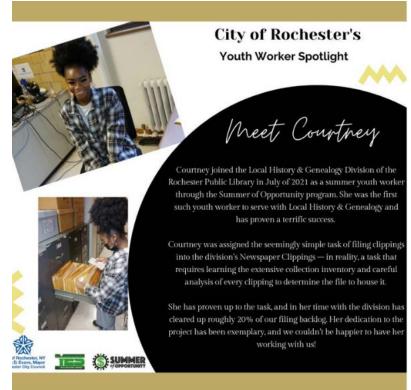
Penfield student becomes first youth worker in library department

Courtney Felton is a dedicated student athlete—committed to her soccer training, her education, and to her work with the City of Rochester's Department of Recreation and Human Services (DRHS).

The DRHS recently highlighted the Penfield student's work that she does with the Local History & Genealogy Division of the Rochester Public Library, for which she is the first youth worker to serve in that department.

The City's Youth Worker Spotlight notes she has proven to be a terrific success, assigned to work in the division's Newspaper Clippings archive. The library credits Courtney's work ethic for clearing up roughly 20% of the filing backlog.

Courtney's commitment to a task is no surprise to her family. They shared that she is also a dedicated soccer player; playing in sectionals, state tournaments, in the Olympic Development Program, and in premier soccer play.



Source: City of Rochester's Department of Recreation and Human Services

'Hope for the city': Pittsford student featured in Rochester's youth employment program

The City of Rochester's Summer of Opportunity Program, or SOOP, is known to make a difference in the city and beyond.

The program provides area youth with six weeks of paid work experience through work sites and programs all across Monroe County.

Urban-Suburban student **Tre Reese** was featured as one of the youth workers in a story broadcasted by WROC news on Channel 8.



Source. Whoe

The news story states Tre found a job he loves through the program, working at a t-shirt shop where he gets hands-on experience in garment printing, sign production, and customer service.

According to his mom, Tre has worked with the program since he was 14 years old. She credits the experience for teaching him different job skills, understanding the concept of working, making his own money, and how to invest that money so it can grow.

Mayor Malik Evans is attributed with saying the summer job opportunity gives young people skills that can carry over into adulthood, setting them up for the future.

Eye on the future: senior to study mechanical engineering

Caleb Wilcox has received a number of recognitions before even graduating high school.

The high school senior is set to graduate this spring, with plans to attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University to study Mechanical Engineering.

North Carolina A&T is a public, historically Black land-grant research university located in Greensboro, North Carolina. It became the nation's largest historically Black university in the fall 2014.

Caleb will join the A&T Aggies later this year, with a number of notable accomplishments to his name. He has been named a George Eastman Young Leader and participated in American Legion Boys State, which is among the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction for high school students in the United States.

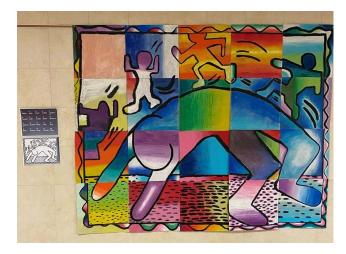
He is also part of the National Honors Society and received a scholarship from the University of Rochester.



Eighth-grade U-S student contributes to collaborative art display

Eighth-grade students in Mrs. Diehl's art class at East Rochester Union Free School District worked together to create large scale, collaborative pieces of artwork. Students showed great skill with shading and communication with peers to create individual "puzzle" pieces of artwork that became a unified piece.

Urban-Suburban student **Sheta Mekonnen** was one of the students involved in the colorful creation!





Help us brag about your student's accomplishments!

Every day, our students are accomplishing incredible feats. From academics to extracurriculars, we want to know about it so we can celebrate it!

Send us an email with information to **Urban_Suburban@boces.monroe.edu** and we will spotlight your student on social media.

Include your student's name, the school they are attending, and photos for us to use in our posts.

Make sure to follow us on Facebook to join in on the celebration: Facebook.com/UrbanSuburbanProgram

District Updates

Brighton

Brighton names Danielle Edmunds as TCMS Principal and Jeffrey Green as Director of Student and Family Engagement

In December, Brighton Central School District announced that the new Principal of Twelve Corners Middle School would be Mrs. Danielle Edmunds. Prior to that, she was serving as the interim principal at TCMS. Danielle began her career as a teacher in the Avon Central School District prior to joining the TCMS staff as an English Language Arts teacher in 2004. She eventually became Director of the Brighton Teacher Center before serving as a Digital Innovations Coach and Interim Assistant Principal at TCMS. Danielle left the District to become an Assistant Principal at Dansville High School in 2019. She returned to Brighton this past summer to become the Instructional Technology Integration Specialist.



Mrs. Danielle Edmunds

The District also announced that Mr. Jeffrey Green would be the Director of Student and Family Engagement. Jeff previously was an assistant principal at Roth Junior High School in the Rush-Henrietta Central School District. Prior to that, he was a seventh and eighth grade social studies teacher in the Rochester City School District at the East Lower School and taught in a variety of social studies positions in the Wake County Public School System and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, both in North Carolina. Jeff will be working on student behavioral programs, family engagement events, transition programs between buildings, and a variety of orientation, parent involvement, and student activity programs. He will be a resource for all families and hopes to bridge gaps when they exist for a student or their family. Additionally, Jeff is also a District liaison for the Urban-Suburban program.



Mr. Jeffrey Green

East Rochester

The East Rochester Union Free School District recently welcomed its new School Resource Officer

Officer John Vicaretti is taking the reins from Officer Walsh who has begun his road patrol position with the ER Police Department.

John, who has worked in law enforcement for 29 years, comes to ER after spending the last nine years as Sergeant with the ER Police Department. He will be working exclusively in the school in his new role as SRO, and he is looking forward to the change of pace and the new challenge that will come with it. Having raised two children himself—a 19-year-old and a 23-year-old who went to Brockport Central—John says he enjoys working with the students, as well as the friendly, small community feel in East Rochester that comes with getting to know people within the community quickly. Welcome John!



Officer John Vicaretti

Sixth-graders say daily motto together in American Sign Language



As part of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lesson, the entire sixth-grade class at the MLA gathered in the auditorium to say their daily motto together in American Sign Language.

Students developed the idea to learn the motto in sign language following a lesson about early communication during the stone age and made a connection to current day American Sign Language. As students learned more about sign language during the SEL lesson, they discovered that Rochester has one of the highest populations of individuals with hearing impairments due to the locality of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) and the Rochester School for the Deaf.

Students were assisted in the exercise by a student teacher, Andy Goings, who had taken sign language classes in college.

The district has a video of the students using ASL to share their daily motto on its homepage of ERschools.org.

Motto:

I am loved and valued.
I am strong, wise and kind.
I will take care of myself
and then take care of others,
every single day of my life.
We are MLA!
We are ER!

Pittsford

Ensuring a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Learning Environment

The Pittsford Central School District is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment where the identity of all is affirmed, and where students experience high expectations, rigorous instruction, and a curriculum that elevates historically marginalized voices. Work is well underway to make appropriate and necessary revisions to curriculum and common resources that reflect the District's commitment to a culturally responsive-sustaining learning environment.



Prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year, a team of 30 elementary educators came together for professional learning and curriculum development leading to the infusion of the Social Justice Standards (developed by the

organization, Learning for Justice) into inquiry based social studies units at every grade level, K–5. Resources identified to support the teaching of each inquiry were carefully selected to ensure the presentation of multiple perspectives and affirmation of diverse social identities, with the ultimate goal of developing multiple inquiries at each grade level that weave together a focus on diversity, equity, civic-mindedness and social justice throughout the elementary school experience.

At the secondary level, teachers who are responsible for teaching United States History in 7th, 8th, and 11th grade have created a bank of high quality resources representing diverse perspectives to assist students in learning a more complete history of our country than can be represented in any single textbook. Teachers are working collaboratively on lessons that incorporate these resources so that students may benefit from the voices and perspectives of people from all ethnicities, races, genders, and abilities to better understand the complex and beautiful tapestry that is our country's history.

New books have also been integrated into English/Language Arts instruction at all grade levels to enhance students' learning experiences by engaging them in texts written by a diverse complement of authors about experiences that can serve as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors for students. Pittsford Central School District strongly believes that all students need to see themselves, their families, and their lived experiences in the literature and materials they encounter throughout their educational experience.

Equity and Inclusivity Coordinator appointed

Pittsford's Board of Education has appointed Vincent I. French to the newly created position of Coordinator of Equity and Inclusivity, a position he began on November 15, 2021.

Mr. French comes to PCSD from the Rochester City School District where he served as a teacher on special assignment at Edison Tech. In this position he was responsible for supporting students and families using restorative practices as well as a variety of other administrative tasks assigned by the building principal. He also served as an eighth-grade English teacher at RCSD's Roberto Clemente School No. 8. He is the co-founder and program director of "Building Better Foundations" where he works with at-risk youth on developing problem solving skills, restorative practices and communication skills, and provides academic intervention supports.



Mr. Vincent I. French

He previously served as the Dean of Culture at Equity Charter Middle School in Bronx, NY, where he worked closely with administrators and parents on school-wide events, policy and supports. At the School for International Studies in Brooklyn, NY, Mr. French served as the Community Assistant where he worked with students and parents on personal, social and academic concerns.

"Mr. French's main responsibilities will be to collaborate with students, teachers and administrators to further promote the District's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives," said Superintendent Michael Pero. "His experience in relationship building will also support PCSD in continuing to sustain positive and collaborative partnerships across diverse stakeholder groups."

The Coordinator of Equity and Inclusivity will assist with the planning, leading, and supporting of best practices as they relate to restorative practices at the classroom, building and District levels; support the continuous learning and professional development of staff in the area of equitable and inclusive instructional practices; assist with the District's ongoing efforts to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse and highly effective faculty and staff; and, assist with the evaluation and selection of high quality curriculum and instructional materials that support all students' growth and opportunities to learn.

Mr. French received his bachelor's degree in English from The College at Brockport. He also holds an M.A.T. in secondary English from SUNY Empire College, and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Leadership from The College at Brockport.

West Irondequoit

Mrs. Kelly Santora appointed new Director of Data, Assessment and Interventions

Mrs. Kelly Santora was appointed the West Irondequoit Central School District's Director of Data, Assessment and Interventions. She has served the district as the Principal of Listwood and Southlawn elementary schools for the past 3½ years. To help ensure a smooth end to this school year, she will continue to lead Listwood and Southlawn before beginning in her new role on July 1, 2022.

"Mrs. Santora is a proven leader in the district and someone who understands our student and family needs from the inside out," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Aaron Johnson. "She is highly regarded for her instructional knowledge and effective building leadership, but most importantly for developing outstanding relationships. In redefining this position, our perfect candidate is not only a person with the skill to perform but someone who can work with others to create and empower a data-driven system to support the needs of all children. Mrs. Santora is exactly that candidate."

Prior to coming to West Irondequoit, Mrs. Santora was an elementary principal in Oakfield-Alabama. Before that, she was the Coordinator of Instructional Services for the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership, where she specialized in designing and implementing professional learning opportunities for teachers in multiple districts. She also was an elementary teacher for seven years.

A Chili native and Aquinas Institute graduate, Mrs. Santora earned a Bachelor of Science in Childhood and Special Education from SUNY Geneseo and a Master's degree in Education from Indiana Wesleyan University. She earned her School District and Building Leadership certifications from the University of Rochester.

"I want to thank our Listwood and Southlawn school communities for their collaborative work over the past four years. It has been an honor and privilege to serve our students and the community. I am proud of the work we have accomplished together," Santora said. "I look forward to the next four months with you as we finish out the school year. I am excited to serve our community in my new role in the years ahead."

West Irondequoit librarian selected to participate in Iditarod

West Irondequoit elementary school librarian, Mrs. Julianne Westrich, was chosen from a worldwide application pool as one of three Teacher on the Trail finalists for the 2023 Iditarod Sled Dog Race. As part of the selection/tryout process for next year, she will spend nine days working at this year's race in Alaska.

"I am so excited for this amazing opportunity," Westrich said. "It's not only something that is very important to my family, but I can't wait to expand my own knowledge of the race and bring it back to our students in West Irondequoit."

Teachers from around the world apply annually for the Teacher on the Trail position. They must submit a portfolio with the application that includes showcase lessons on the Iditarod from their own classrooms and their own background with regard to performing tasks of the Teacher on the Trail. They also must submit letters of support from their school district and administrators, a video and answer important situational questions.

Going to Alaska for this year's Iditarod is just the next round of competition. Finalists will work with Iditarod education committee members, present at the educators' conference and do "assignments."

Westrich is in her fourth year working in West Irondequoit. Prior to that, she worked for the Rochester Museum and Science Center teaching preschool. Her work in West Irondequoit also included lessons on the Iditarod, a passion born in 2006. That's when her daughter, then just 2 years old, fell in love with a stuffed animal that was a Husky dog.

"Even though we knew nothing about Siberian Huskies and nothing about dog sledding, it lit a spark and by the time she was 5 we knew everything about the Iditarod, and we've been following it ever since," Westrich said of the race that started in 1973 and covers 1,000 miles over the course of a month.

"This race is super important to my family. When something is as exciting and wonderful and fun as the Iditarod I felt like I needed to share it with all of my students in West Irondequoit."



A program of monroe ONE