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CITY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT OF

**New  
Rochelle**

**No School Monday**

**September 25**

The CSDNR wishes a peaceful and  
meaningful Yom Kippur to all who celebrate



## Two Named National Merit Semifinalists



*Seniors Veronica Yu and Eileen Weisner are competing  
for National Merit Scholarships.*

Two New Rochelle High School  
seniors have been named  
semifinalists in the 2024 National  
Merit Scholarship program

The semifinalists, Eileen Weisner and Veronica Yu, are among approximately 16,000 semifinalists nationwide. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,140 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$28 million that will be offered next spring.

More than 1.3 million juniors in about 21,000 high schools entered the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the Preliminary SAT, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

“I’m thrilled to receive this recognition and I’m grateful for the support of my parents and teachers throughout my schooling,” said Eileen. “The confidence they’ve put in me continually motivates me to do my best. I’m happy to see results from the hard work I’ve put in, and I’m so proud to be able to share this experience with

Veronica.”

Veronica echoed those sentiments, “It’s really exciting to be a semifinalist with Eileen. I’m truly honored to receive this distinction,” she said. “It feels like I’m gaining recognition for a lot of the hard work that I’ve put in over the years and I’m so grateful for the opportunity to be considered for honors such as the National Merit Scholarship.”

To be considered for a merit scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition. About 95 percent of semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and about half of the finalists will win the prestigious scholarship award.

## Seven Alumni Receive AP® Capstone Diploma

Seven New Rochelle High School graduates have been awarded the prestigious Advanced Placement (AP®) Capstone Diploma based on their scores on AP exams last year.

In an outstanding achievement, Sofia Acosta, Natalie Attia, Ani Costa, Ashley Dallos, Piper Genkin, Skye Hill, and Nathaniel Morris earned scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar, AP Research, and four additional AP exams. All graduated in June and are now attending college.



AP® Capstone is a College Board diploma program featuring yearlong AP Seminar and AP Research courses that offer student-centered, project-based learning experiences while incorporating performance-based assessments. Instead of focusing on one specific academic discipline like regular AP courses, AP Seminar and AP Research are interdisciplinary; students are encouraged to create research projects based on topics of personal interest.

The program, valued by colleges and universities around the globe, prepares students for college and career success by developing critical thinking, academic research, collaboration, presentation, and time management skills.

“This year’s students did an exceptional job with their research, and I’m very proud of all they accomplished, ” said AP® Capstone and Seminar teacher Eric Hedman. “The AP Capstone program provides students with so many useful skills in critical thinking and research that I am confident will serve them well in college and beyond. To their credit, these students seized every opportunity to ensure the year and their project had meaning and impact.”

The students’ research topics reflected a wide range of interests: the viability of a transition to solar power; the correlation between personality and student field of interest; LGBTQ+ representation in English curricula; the influence of public opinion polls on voting behaviors; quantifying walkability for Quaker Ridge; personality trends in student thespians; the association between issues-centered advertising and electoral overperformance.

“We applaud the students for this accomplishment and Mr. Hedman, who demonstrated tremendous work ethic and commitment to his students for the two years of the Capstone project,” said Assistant Principal Zahida Aminy. The College Board’s Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) gives students the opportunity to take challenging college-level courses while still in high school. A 3 or higher on an AP Exam has multiple benefits for students, including earning college credit, advanced placement, or both for successful performance on AP Exams, saving them time and money. Research shows AP students are better prepared for and more likely to enroll and remain in college, do well in classes, and earn their degrees on time. Each exam is developed by a committee of college and university faculty and AP teachers, ensuring that AP Exams align with their high standards.

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## Ward Community Celebrates Hispanic Heritage

Ward Elementary School students are celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month with enthusiasm. Students are participating in several



classroom activities to recognize the school's diversity and commitment to equity and inclusion.



National Hispanic Heritage Month is commemorated annually between September 15 - October 15, recognizing the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

"It allows students, staff members, and families to feel a sense of deeper connection and prompts conversation," said school counselor Brooke Fischer. "It shows the importance to learn about where you come from, where others come from, and to feel a sense of pride."

Located by the main entrance of the school for everyone to see is a colorful bulletin board created by the Ward Pupil Personnel Services team, reflecting the diversity of the school community with Hispanic flags, sayings, and bitmojis of administration, PPS staff, and other support personnel.

## Columbus Honored for Community Service

Columbus Elementary School is the recipient of Feeding Westchester's Ripple Impact Award, an honor given to the organization's partners who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to fulfilling the needs of their community.

The school hosts a bi-monthly food pantry on behalf of Feeding Westchester. School staff, including custodians, security, main office staff, and clinicians prepare a farmers' market-type arrangement, allowing school families and neighbors to stroll and choose food items they need and prefer.

"The Ripple Impact Award is bestowed upon a partner agency that goes above and beyond providing food assistance to individuals and extends its impact to encompass families as well," said Christopher McGregor of Feeding Westchester.



*Columbus Elementary principal Michael Galland, with aides who assist with the school's food pantry, from left Gloria Yanez, Luz Valencia, Lorena Guizar*

"Your noteworthy commitment to well-organized distributions targeting families in your neighborhood has not gone unnoticed. We take pride in recognizing Columbus as a catalyst for positive change, gradually transforming the community."

"We are deeply honored by the recognition of the work so many in our school have devoted to the bi-monthly food pantry at Columbus," said Principal Michael Galland, who received the award at a reception in White Plains last week alongside four school aides who are among the many staff members who work on the food pantry.

Feeding Westchester secures food and donations from national food and grocery manufacturers, retailers, shippers, packers, and growers, and distributes it through various partners, such as Columbus Elementary. Nearly 40 percent of the food distributed is fresh fruit and vegetables.

“Partnering with Feeding Westchester is foundational to our vision of our school as a beacon in the neighborhood, a comprehensive service-oriented community school,” said Mr. Galland.

Assistant Principal Francis Cruz added, “The award recognizes our collective efforts and commitment to service in our school neighborhood. We see our work supporting the pantry every other week as both regular work that we are humbled to provide and work of the heart.”

## NRFD to the Rescue!



Thanks to the New Rochelle Fire Department for helping to hoist the flag at Columbus Elementary after high winds recently damaged the flagpole’s halyard.

Unable to get a mechanical lift close enough to make the repair, the school district’s Facilities Department reached out to the NRFD.

“The CSDNR and NRFD have a very long-standing and collaborative relationship, as NRFD completes the district’s NYSED mandatory annual fire inspections,” said Director of Facilities Keith Watkins.

The request was made for support, and the fire department came to the rescue with a ladder truck to install a new halyard. The Columbus flag is once again flying!



## Students Selected for All-State Music

# Ensemble



NYSSMA All-State musicians and alternates, from left, Rocco Sansotta, Ellis Smith, Yeray Lopez, Veronica Yu, Aviola Lim, and Sneha Vinoy.

*Photo credit: New Rochelle High School Art Student Emma Fear*

Four New Rochelle High School students will head to the New York State Schools Music Association (NYSSMA) All-State Winter Conference in December to perform with the state's most talented high school musicians. Two others are named alternates.

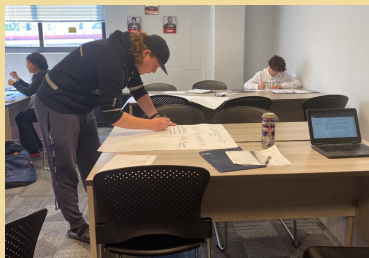
Senior Aviola Lim, a Soprano 2; senior Ellis Smith, Tenor 1; and junior Rocco Sansotta, Tenor 1; will perform with the All-State Mixed Chorus. Sneha Vinoy, a junior, is an Alternate as Soprano 2. Performing with the All-State Symphony Orchestra is senior Veronica Yu, Violin - Part I. Junior Yeray Lopez Ibarra is an Alternate on Bb Clarinet.

The All-State band, chorus, orchestra, and jazz ensembles are honors groups comprised of the top students from school music departments across the state with performances directed by renowned guest conductors.

The All-State Music Winter Conference will be held in Rochester, with the instrumental and vocal jazz ensembles performing on December 2 and mixed chorus, symphonic band, and symphony orchestra performing on December 3.

The New Rochelle students are among approximately 600 students selected from more than 6,500 sophomores and juniors who entered the competition in the spring to participate in the NYSSMA Conference All-State music groups.

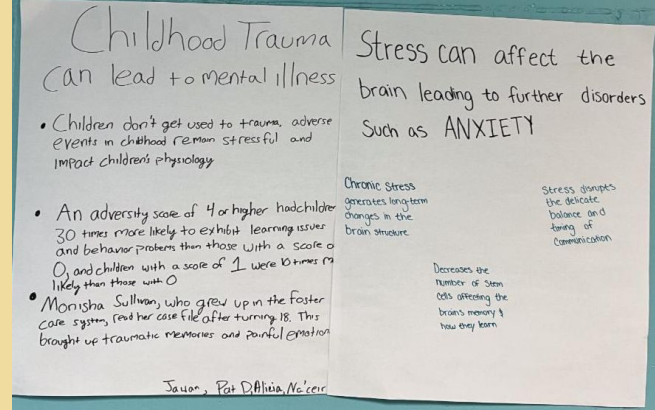
## Huguenot Students Hit the Ground Running



Students at Huguenot Academy of NRHS got straight to work when school opened this month! Juniors in the AP US History program swiftly began researching the development of the colonies and learning about key people and events. They prepared posters for a class gallery walk to show their research and then discussed how the experiences of the colonies shaped American politics, examining similarities and differences between the colonies.

Utilizing college-level texts, students in the Abnormal Psychology class explored opposing viewpoints. Students delved into childhood trauma and mental illness, and how stress can cause physiological changes in the body.

Keep up the great work!



Poster presentation from Abnormal Psychology class at Huguenot Academy of NRHS



## Lucero Appointed Pre-K-12 Performing and Visual Arts Director

Albert Leonard Middle School Assistant Principal Matthew Lucero has been appointed Pre-K-12 Director of Performing and Visual Arts, effective next week. Lucero, who began his career as a music teacher in Nyack, went on to chair that district's music department for three years before joining us in New Rochelle in 2019.

In a letter to ALMS staff, Mr. Lucero noted that he has mixed emotions about leaving ALMS and reflected on the remarkable experiences he had at the middle school.

"This transition marks a significant personal and professional milestone for me," he said, noting his "heartfelt gratitude for the remarkable experiences and memories we have shared during my time as assistant principal at Albert Leonard and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work alongside this amazing administrative team."

As a classically trained pianist and violinist with teaching and administrative experience in all grade levels, Mr. Lucero

is well placed to take over the school district's performing arts oversight. "My previous experience as a music department chairperson has equipped me with a unique perspective and skill set that aligns well with the educational leadership needed to contribute to the CSDNR district's vision and mission of preparing students for engagement in a diverse world," he said.

"I am genuinely thrilled about the chance to collaborate with our talented faculty and students here in New Rochelle," he said. "Having seen the incredible work and performances of our students during my time in the district, I am even more honored and excited to have the opportunity to lead this incredible team in this new role."

Mr. Lucero received his bachelor's in music education from Hofstra University, a master's in music and music education from Columbia Teachers College and a certificate in educational leadership from SUNY New Paltz.

He takes over the Department of Performing and Visual Arts from Deepak Marwah, who was recently appointed principal of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts in New York City.



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you have any questions

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## High School Hives Provide Learning Opportunity



Six New Rochelle High School students participated in a four-week STEM initiative



“It will provide an environment where students can learn hands-on how to care for

offered by Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle (BGCNR) and Bronx Community College (BCC) this summer, focusing on the science and art of apiology - beekeeping.

Donning beekeeper suits, the students visited the high school's bee apiary each week to learn about the insects' habitat while observing the bees up-close. By the end of the program, the students were feeding them sugar water. Students learned about the life cycle of bees and their contribution to society.

"Most students didn't even know what an apiary is, let alone that there was one in their high school," said BGCNR's Yolanda Roberson who coordinated the program. "They were fascinated observing the bees. Most of their interests were piqued, and I'm sure they will continue to support the apiary throughout their high school years."

The hives were installed at the high school last spring as part of an independent study project of Ashley Valencia who graduated last June. The BGCNR program is exactly what she had hoped would result from her project.

bees and produce honey," she said when creating her project.

Beekeeping has played a vital role in human history - the world's oldest honey dates to the 35th century B.C. - and, today, bees are responsible for pollinating about one-third of the world's food supply. But they are now an at-risk species due to changes in human behavior, urbanization, and increased use of pesticides and herbicides. Initiatives like this are important in helping to understand the insects' critical role in our ecosystem.

This is just one of the partnerships between CSDNR and BGCNR to offer our youth experiences that encourage them to explore science, math, art, and the humanities, and reveal new study and possible career paths.

"We're grateful to BCC to providing access to this unique learning opportunity, which was made possible via its Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)," said Mrs. Roberson. STEP provides free, direct science enrichment to New York middle and high school students to build and support core skills, confidence, and a sense of imagination.

## Please complete a meal application

Families who have not already done so are asked to prioritize completing the district's [meal application](#). While school breakfasts and lunches are free for all students, the school district will only receive reimbursement from the federal government for families who have completed the application.

Parents may also set up [meal accounts](#) to add funds for a la carte food items, snacks, and second meals for their children. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like a meal application sent, please email Wendy Ochoa-Grosso at [wgrosso@redlearn.org](mailto:wgrosso@redlearn.org) or call (914)576-4217.



## Athletics



**Football**  
New Rochelle 6 vs. Suffern 28



### Girls' Soccer

New Rochelle 1 vs. N. Rockland 5  
New Rochelle 2 vs. John Jay EF 1  
New Rochelle 0 vs. Horace Greeley 1

New Rochelle 36 vs. Mt.  
Vernon 20

### Tennis

New Rochelle 1 vs. Rye 6  
New Rochelle 0 vs. Harrison 7

### Boys' Volleyball

New Rochelle 2 vs. Tappan Zee 3  
New Rochelle 3 vs. Carmel 2  
New Rochelle 0 vs. Clarkstown 3

### Girls' Volleyball

New Rochelle 3 vs. Yonkers 0  
New Rochelle 1 vs. White Plains 3  
New Rochelle 3 v. Clarkstown No.



## Check Out the Community Events!

Get the latest info

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