



City School District of  
**ALBANY**

# Capital Education

Winter 2020

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## Rebuilding Albany High: Phase 1 complete!

Albany High School students and staff returned from the winter break in February to a magnificent new academic building, marking the completion of the first phase of the school's major construction project.

The City School District of Albany celebrated the opening of the bright, spacious, state-of-the-art building with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and public tour Feb. 22. Students and staff officially moved in the following Monday.

"Our vision for the future of Albany High School is starting to become a reality," said Superintendent Kaweeda G. Adams (please visit page 2 to read more from the superintendent about the project).

"Bringing this first new facility into operation for our students and staff is a major step forward for the high school, our school district and our entire community."

The three-story, 120,000-square-foot facility is the new home for three of Albany High's four themed academies – Discovery, Innovation and Leadership, each with its own floor.

Citizenship Academy also has relocated to its own expanded space within the current academic building.

The design and construction of the new building addressed academic and practical challenges that have hampered the 47-year-old high school for many years.

The new facility features spacious classrooms with large windows that provide every classroom with natural light, which has been demonstrated to improve the learning environment for students.

Every classroom has its own heating and cooling controls, and all classrooms are separated by soundproof walls.

All classrooms are equipped with Promethean interactive whiteboards, and the science classrooms provide students access to cutting-edge STEM opportunities.

(continued on page 6)

### Student achievement:

### Positively engaging

Meet Dabar Zarzuela, Renaissance man.

The Albany High School senior is president of his class and among the top students in the Class of 2020. He plays guard on the Falcons basketball team, and he played trumpet in band until he couldn't fit it in his schedule any longer.

He wants to be a surgeon, and knows how to change your car's oil.

A well-rounded guy, no question about it. His philosophy in life?

"I always try to be positive with everyone I encounter," Zarzuela said. "You can't do anything more than block out negative people and kill them with your own kindness."

He credits his parents for shaping his worldview.

"Be respectful to those around you. Be yourself – your true self. That's what I learned and the way I built my life," he said.

Walk down the halls of Albany High with Zarzuela and it seems like he is friends with everyone.

He eschews Facebook and other social media ("Lots of distractions and negativity."), and he keeps on the straight and narrow with help from his basketball teammates and his guidance counselor, Kimberly Baker.

"I use the pressure to influence me to do the right thing," he said. "My friends say, 'You have to be something good. You can't waste all that talent.'"

Baker also is confident that Zarzuela "will leave his mark on society in an incredibly

positive way."

"Dabar is academically gifted and unfailingly kind and gracious," she said. "He is thoughtful about his place in the world and full of ideas about how to contribute to his community."

Being a good leader and setting a good example are important to Zarzuela, who continues to take advanced classes through his final semesters. He plans to study biology in college and eventually wants to be a surgeon.

His top college choice is across the country – UCLA.

"I've been in Albany my whole life," Zarzuela said. "Going to college in California will give me a whole new set of experiences and make me a more independent person."



# Vision becomes reality

## From the superintendent

Four years ago, our community came together to support the renovation and rebuilding of Albany High School. This month, we are celebrating the completion of the first phase of the project: the opening of our new academic building.

The vision has become reality. It is a thrilling time for all of us!

Albany High's new facility is a three-story, 120,000-square-foot building that will be home to three of the school's four themed academies: Discovery, Innovation and Leadership (see *related story, page 1*). Citizenship Academy will relocate to the second floor of the original building.

Work is underway on Phase 2, a new music and art wing along Washington Avenue that is scheduled for completion in the fall. We expect all renovations and rebuilding to be completed in 2025.

As an educator, I know that outstanding teaching and learning happens when the environment supports the delivery of quality instruction. Our new academic building is filled many of the elements that support a positive, conducive learning environment.

Those elements include an abundance of natural light, a reliable heating and cooling system and first-rate educational equipment designed for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century learner.

The district held community tours and a ribbon-cutting ceremony Saturday, Feb. 22, and students, faculty and staff officially moved into the new space the following week.

Anyone who spends time at or near Albany High witnessed the building rising from the ground over the past two years.

Our construction and facilities teams worked hard to minimize noise, dust and other disruptions that come along with a massive construction project. I appreciate their ongoing efforts, and the patience of students, faculty and staff as the project continues.

We thank CSArch, Turner Construction



and our district's Maintenance and Operations Division for their continued support in this process.

The new building is an important part of our collective efforts to increase student success.

Graduation rates have consistently increased in the past five years, and we have our highest graduation rate – 68% – since the state started measuring graduation rates under its current methodology in 2005.

We are committed to the success of our students, and we know that we are on the right path for improved student success. Our students deserve to learn in quality facilities.

Being in a state-of-the-art school moves us closer to our vision of being a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

All in for Albany! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Yours in education,

**Kaweeda G. Adams**  
Superintendent



# Voices

**Q:** February is Black History Month. Who is the most influential African-American leader you've learned about this school year?



“ Frederick Douglass is a profound historical figure. Douglass became furious with the institution of slavery and that anger fueled his desire for freedom. He made the journey to freedom and became a part of the abolitionist movement so that he could help other slaves enjoy the freedom they deserved. He really is an amazing leader and inspirational African-American. ”

– **Johanna Campbell**

Albany High School  
Senior



“ The most influential African-American I've learned about is Harriet Tubman. She was a person who escaped slavery. She came back to help free other slaves. Harriet was separated from her mom and dad when she was young. She became a hero for freeing people from slavery. ”

– **Jonathan Pluviose**

Pine Hills Elementary School  
Fourth grade



“ Barack Obama influenced us by being the first African-American president the United States ever had. He influenced us to never give up on our dreams but instead follow them. He also influenced us because he kept trying, and by trying his best he won the election fair and square. ”

– **Aimel Ruemmele**

Delaware Community School  
Fourth grade



“ I learned about Bessie Coleman when we learned about aviation. She was known for becoming the first African-American woman to stage a public flight. She broke barriers and became the world's first black woman to earn a pilot's license. Bessie said, 'The air is the only place free from prejudice.' ”

– **Maliah Wilkerson**

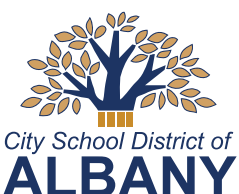
TOAST  
Fifth grade



“ The most influential African-American leader I've learned about in school is Martin Luther King Jr. I feel this way because he fought for equal rights for African-Americans. He used his words, not violence, to get equal rights. Because of what he did, Martin Luther King Jr. changed the world we have today. ”

– **DuShan Wilson**

North Albany Middle School  
Sixth grade



Capital Education is published by the City School District of Albany. Please direct comments about the newsletter, story ideas and questions to either:

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# Pre-K, magnet lotteries March 18

## Pre-K applications available through March 6

The City School District of Albany's prekindergarten and magnet programs offer families an array of options for an outstanding elementary school experience.

The lotteries to enroll in pre-K and magnet programs for the 2020-21 school year will be held March 18 at 10 a.m. at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST).

Applications for the pre-K lottery are due March 6 (the application period for the magnet lottery was Jan. 2-31; visit [albanyschools.org/magnet](http://albanyschools.org/magnet) for more information about those programs).

### Pre-K: Lifelong learning begins here

The district provides full-day prekindergarten for more than 700 4-year-olds at all eight neighborhood elementary schools, including our three themed magnet schools and the bilingual Dual Language Program, and at 15 community locations.

To be eligible for the March pre-K lottery,

children must be 4 by Dec. 1, 2020.

You can download an application and find a complete list of our pre-K programs and locations at [albanyschools.org/prek](http://albanyschools.org/prek). Applications also are available at all schools and community pre-K providers, and at Central Registration, 75 Watervliet Ave.

The district also offers pre-K for 3-year-olds at community locations. A lottery for those spots will be held later this spring.

Transportation is not provided for any pre-K programs.

### After the lotteries

Once the pre-K and magnet lotteries take place March 18, the district will send letters to all families who submitted applications.

If your child is awarded a seat, you must register by the deadline indicated in the letter.

If you do not register by that deadline you risk losing your child's spot.



# #BeCounted

@albanynycounts

[Albanycounts.com](http://Albanycounts.com)

## You count for Albany!

Don't miss out on the biggest event of the spring – the 2020 U.S. Census!

The once-a-decade population count will have a significant impact on the entire city, including the City School District of Albany, and the participation of all residents is critical.

Reaching 100,000 residents for the first time since 1990 would be a major milestone for the city, unlocking important new aid opportunities that would benefit all residents. The city's population in the 2010 census was 97,856.

"We all have the unique opportunity to truly make a difference," said Superintendent Kaweeda G. Adams. "Every adult and child must be accurately represented to ensure the city and school district receive our fair share of federal funding."

More than \$675 billion is at stake nationally.

The district's allocation is used to continue and grow resources that serve low-income families like Title I aid, special education funding, Head Start and preschool grants, and the National School Lunch Program, which currently allows the district to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students.

"These are crucial services that we believe are invaluable to our students and families," Adams said.

Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail or by phone.

Look for a census postcard in March or April. The postcard will include a code that you can use to respond online, and a phone number you can call to complete the survey that way if that's easier. You can respond online or by phone in 12 different languages.

If you have questions or need help, send an email to [info@albanycounts.com](mailto:info@albanycounts.com).

Your responses to the 2020 census are safe, secure and protected by federal law. Your answers – and even your address – can only be used to produce statistics and cannot be used against you in any way.

By law, all census responses are completely confidential and cannot be accessed by any court or government agency. You can find much more information about the census at [albanycounts.com](http://albanycounts.com).

You also can contact district Community Outreach Coordinator Cathy Edmondson at [cedmondson@albany.k12.ny.us](mailto:cedmondson@albany.k12.ny.us) or (518) 475-6067.

"If some groups aren't accurately represented, it will be difficult for the district to cover the needs that exist in our community," Adams said. "Underfunded schools affect all students."

## Non-public school transportation deadline



State law requires Albany parents and guardians whose children will attend a non-public school in 2020-21 to submit a written request for transportation to the City School District of Albany by April 1.

The purpose of this deadline is to enable districts to budget funds and make necessary arrangements to provide reasonable and economical transportation. This applies to students who will attend private, parochial and charter schools.

Please note that eligible students attending middle school and high school will be transported via CDTA buses.

For non-public school students who move into the city after the April 1 deadline, parents and guardians must submit a

written request for transportation within 30 days after establishing residency.

In order to qualify for transportation, students must meet the requirements under the district's Transportation Policy. Visit the [albanyschools.org/transportation](http://albanyschools.org/transportation) for that policy.

Requests should be mailed to:

Inho Suh  
Director of Transportation  
City School District of Albany  
75 Watervliet Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206

For more information, contact the Transportation Department at (518) 475-6170.



(Above left) Giffen Memorial Elementary School first-grader **E'myh Outing** worked on a vowel exercise with teacher **Emily Crisorio** on Dec. 20.

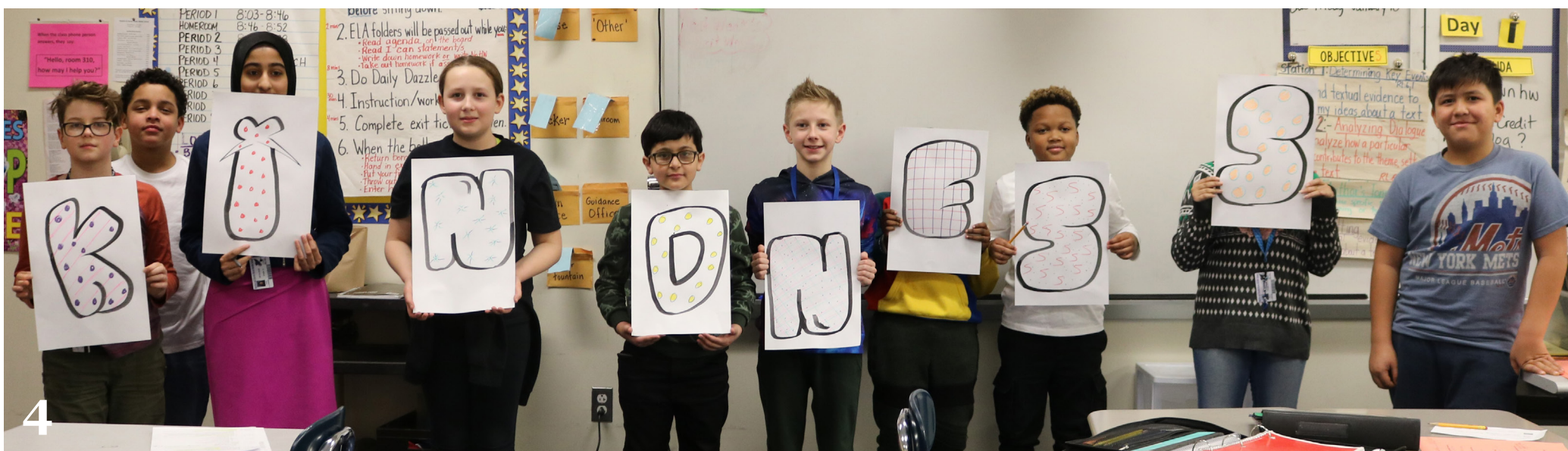
(Above right) Sixth-grader **Edward Verhoff** showed off his unicycle skills during Eagle Point Elementary School's Circus Theatrics performance Dec. 20. The show, which instilled athleticism, artistry, mental toughness and the importance of working together, was made possible thanks to a CDPHP Albany Fund for Education grant.



(Left) Senior **Christian Luk Ayahao** gave a thumbs-up before rolling up his sleeve at Albany High School's Jan. 9 blood donation drive. The effort resulted in 52 pints of blood collected that day, which can help up to 156 people! The school will host one more drive in May and is angling for scholarship dollars from the American Red Cross.

(Right) Albany International Center eighth-grader **Maulidi Majaliwa** posed with ENL teacher **Kristen Backes** following a Jan. 10 lesson on sentence structure and power dynamics.

(Below) At Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School, sixth-graders demonstrated that kindness begins with them! On Jan. 3, administrators and the Guidance Department kicked off the school's second annual Kindness Campaign, which teaches students how to identify and stand up to bullying.





(Above) On Jan. 24, Arbor Hill Elementary School students **Anarie West**, **NayShawn Wills**, **Malalai Syed Mohammad** and **Breanna Walker** participated in the school's Math Sprint, led by the historic African-American women's civic organization Albany District Links. The fifth-graders were tasked with solving math problems as quickly as possible during the friendly and educational competition.

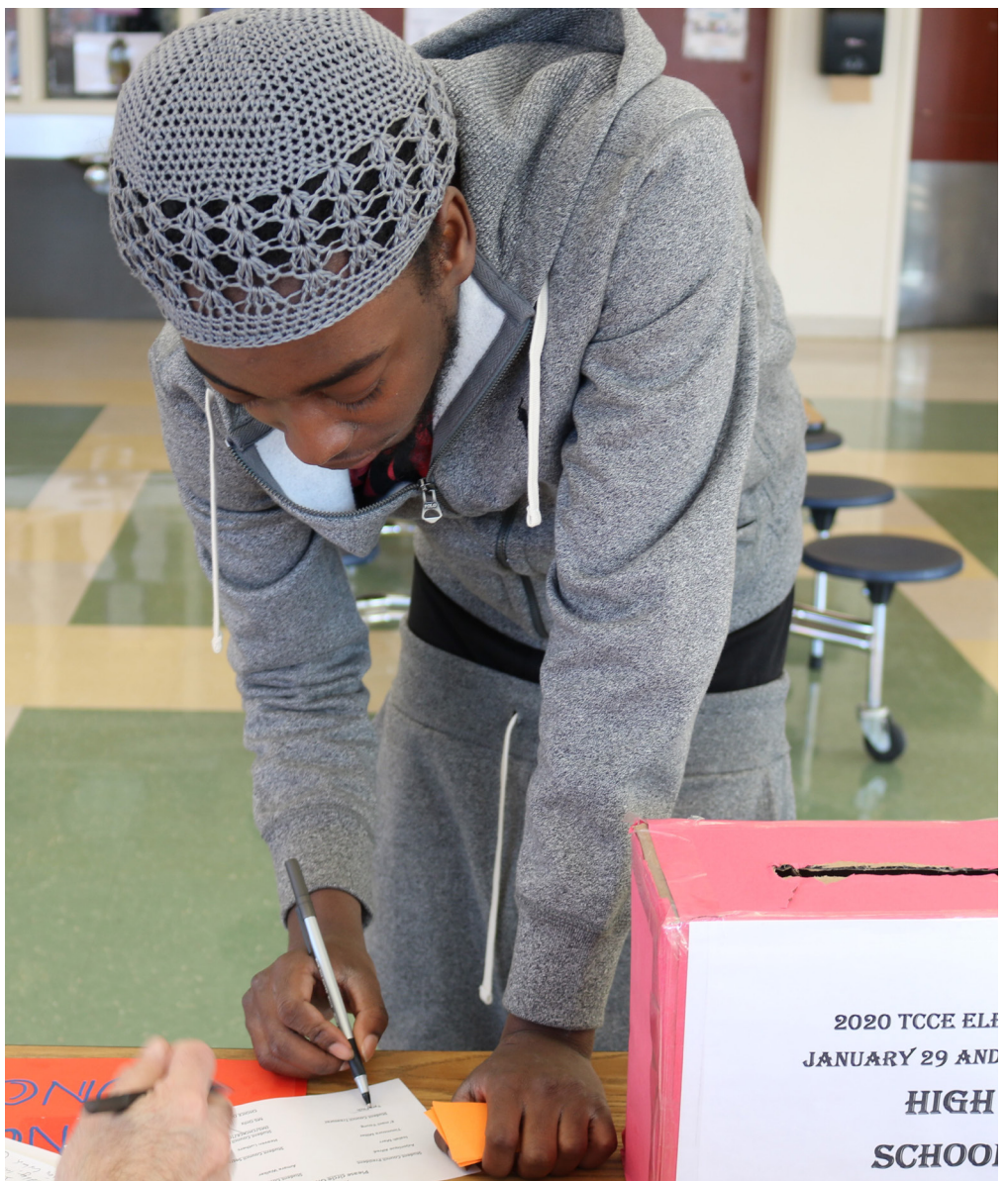


(Above right) Montessori Magnet School first-grader **Brianna Kelley** closely examined a geode during an exploration of geology Jan. 24.

(Right) Tony Clement Center for Education junior **EShaun Crawford** cast his vote for class president on Jan. 29. It was the alternative school's first-ever Student Government Association election.

(Below right) Falcon Robotics Team 1493 members, families and alums gathered Jan. 7 at Albany High School for the unveiling of the 2020 FIRST Robotics competition. The team heads to RPI March 11-14 for the regional New York Tech Valley FIRST competition, where they'll simultaneously collaborate with and face off against other high school teams and their robotic creations. Go Falcons!

(Below) New Scotland Elementary School second-grader **Audrey Welsh** displayed her work while wrapping up a Jan. 24 mathematics lesson on money and adding change.





# Albany High *(continued from page 1)*

There are breakout rooms to encourage students and teachers to work together in small groups, and the hallways provide open sightlines for improved supervision and security.

"We are thrilled to deliver on our promise to our community with this important new facility," said Board of Education President Anne Savage. "We know that these changes will position Albany High to serve our city's students and families well for generations to come, and we look forward to seeing the rest of the project come to fruition in the next few years."

The full project will be completed in three additional phases.

The second phase, underway along Washington Avenue, will open in the fall and house new music and

art classrooms.

The district plans to break ground on Phase 3 later this spring. That phase will include construction of a new main entrance on Washington Avenue, renovations to the auditorium including adding a balcony, and a new library and classrooms on the Washington Avenue end of the current academic building.

Phase 4 will enclose the courtyard and fully renovate the current academic building. That will include renovating the first floor to house the career and technical education programs currently located 2½ blocks away at the Abrookin Career and Technical Center.

The project is scheduled to be finished in 2025.

## Important special education reminders

Parents have the right to request a referral and evaluation of a child for the purposes of special education services or programs.

If you believe your child has a disability that requires special education or special accommodations, contact your child's building principal. You also can call Assistant Director of Special Education Catie Magil at (518) 475-6150 to discuss whether your child should be referred to the committee or the "504 Team" for a full evaluation.

For more information and to download a copy of *Special Education in New York State for Children Ages 3-21: A Parent's Guide*, please visit [albanyschools.org/specialed](http://albanyschools.org/specialed).

If your child attends a non-public school in Albany, you may request an evaluation to determine eligibility and need for special education by writing to the Committee on Special Education, 75 Watervliet Ave., Albany, NY 12206.

For a student found eligible before April 1, a parent may request services to begin within 30 days of the determination.

If you plan to enroll your child in a non-public school in Albany in 2020-21, you must provide a written request for services to the Committee on Special Education by June 1. We urge you to provide your request as early as possible so the district's Committee on Special Education can develop an Individual Education Service Plan (IESP) for your student.

Please note that there is an April 1 deadline for requesting transportation if your child will attend a non-public school in Albany (*see related story on page 3*).

If your child will attend a non-public school outside Albany in 2020-21 and you want services, you need to request the services in writing from the public district where the school is located, also by June 1.

The district does not provide services to non-public-school students found eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Please contact Magil or the Special Education Department at (518) 475-6150 if you have questions.

## Volunteer Spotlight Michelle Culbertson

### Age and occupation:

50, Full-time mom to Megan and Kaylee

### Volunteers at:

Montessori Magnet School.

Culbertson started when her daughters went to the school (they're in high school now), and she's been there since. At least three times a week, she does whatever's needed, whether it's photocopying, doing crafts and worksheets with students, helping in the library or laminating. She also occasionally volunteers at Giffen Memorial Elementary School events.

### Why you volunteer:

"It gives me a purpose. I feel like I'm making a difference, and I enjoy it."

**AHS THEATRE ENSEMBLE PRESENTS**  
**CABARET**

DIRECTED BY WARD DALES AND GREGORY THEODORE MARSH  
CHOREOGRAPHED BY GREGORY THEODORE MARSH  
**MARCH 12-14 @ 7 PM • MARCH 15 @ 2 PM, 2020**

## State tests on the horizon

Date	Test
March 9–June 5*	New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA): these tests in ELA, math, science and social studies measure the progress of students with disabilities in grades 3-12
March 25–26	New York State ELA exam, grades 3-8 (make-ups March 27-April 1)
April 6–May 15*	Window for speaking part of New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) exam. These tests measure the progress of English-language learners from kindergarten through grade 12.
April 22–23	New York State Math exam, grades 3-8 (make-ups April 24-28)
May 4–15*	Window for listening, reading and writing parts of NYSESLAT exam
May 18–29*	Window for the performance part of New York State Science exam, grades 4 and 8
June 1	Written part of New York State Science exam, grades 4 and 8 (make-ups June 2-3)
June 2 and June 17–25	Regents exams: high school exams that measure ability in English, math, science, social studies and foreign language, grades 8-12

\*Dates vary from school to school; families will receive a letter from school indicating the dates

# Awards & Achievements

## Hackett places in regional STEM contest

Congratulations to the up-and-coming engineers in the William S. Hackett Middle School STEM Club! They took third place overall in the regional Future City Competition held Jan. 11 at The Armory at Sage College.

Future City is an annual nationwide competition that focuses on improving the math, engineering and science skills of students in grades 6-8. Students are challenged to imagine, research, design and build cities of the future, and then solve a problem facing the city.

The problem changes each year. In 2020, teams chose a threat to their city's water supply and designed a system to maintain a reliable system of clean drinking water.

Led by adviser and teacher **Allison Griner**, Hackett's team spent the last four months preparing for January's competition. Besides coming in third overall, they earned awards for "Most Innovating Moving Part" and "Best Planned Future City."

The team is pictured at right with their award-winning entry.

## Another teacher reaches gold standard

Albany High School English teacher **Wan Oliviere** has reached a professional gold standard: She has joined the ranks of City School District of Albany educators who have earned the prestigious National Board Certification.

The National Board of Teaching Standards develops rigorous standards for teaching and certifies teachers who meet those standards. The process takes one to three years and teachers are required to submit four portfolio entries, including video recordings of classroom activities and examples of student work.

They also must pass an assessment that is specific to their certification area.

Oliviere is one of 25 current or retired district teachers who have the certification. Congratulations to her!

Oliviere is pictured at right with Albany High seniors Christine La and Enrique Fabila.

## Top spellers vie for best

**Isaac Allen's** spelling ability is out of this G-A-L-A-X-Y.

That's the word the Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School eighth-grader spelled correctly Jan. 10 to clinch the title of District Spelling Bee Champion. He then went on to finish among the Final Four at the Capital Region Spelling Bee, held Feb. 4 at Proctor's Theater in Schenectady.

The annual district bee in January is for fourth-through eighth-graders. It's a nail-biter of a competition that brings together the winners from bees at each elementary and middle school.

Allen also was the district champion in 2018 and runner-up in 2019.

Joining him at this year's regional competition in Schenectady were **Ayub Gedi** (grade 6, North Albany Middle School), **Timothy Reaport** (grade 6, Albany School of Humanities), **Jaemier Hemingway** (grade 6, Giffen Memorial Elementary School) and **Ezekiel Dixon** (grade 4, Arbor Hill Elementary School).

Gedi and Allen are pictured at right below after the Jan. 10 district bee.

Congratulations to all of this year's top spellers!

## Falcon turns to Saint

This is **Ahniysha "Baby" Jackson's** last season in Falcon blue. Next season the 5-foot-8 guard, who has scored more than 1,400 career points, will be wearing green and gold after signing a national letter of intent to continue her basketball career at Siena College.

Known for her prolific 3-point shooting, Jackson led the Falcons to the Class AA semifinals during the 2018-19 season. She is the third member of the Albany High girls' basketball team to sign a Division I national letter of intent since 2013, following Emia Willingham (Siena) and Mylah Chandler (Colgate).

"Baby is a very special person to me and I am so proud of all that she has accomplished," said coach **Decky Lawson**, who also has helped numerous other student-athletes prepare to continue their playing careers in college during his tenure.

Jackson also considered playing at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, but made the decision to play locally, where family, friends, coaches and teammates can continue to provide the support that's gotten her to where she is today.

"Siena was a perfect fit," she said. "I'm here and I'm happy."

With one game to go in the regular season, Jackson was averaging 21 points, three rebounds and four assists for the 8-8 Lady Falcons.

Jackson is pictured at right below signing her letter of intent.

## Cheer takes second at sectionals

The team that is always **#allinforalbany** earned some much deserved recognition of their own this winter sports season!

The Albany High School cheerleading team, led by coach **Jahmere Holland**, placed second among Suburban Council teams during a competition in Saratoga Springs on Feb. 1.

In addition to a successful competition season this year, the squad is also a constant presence at basketball games, rallying both the crowd and their fellow student-athletes.



Hackett's STEM Club



Albany High's Wan Oliviere (center)



Top spellers Ayub Gedi (left) and Isaac Allen

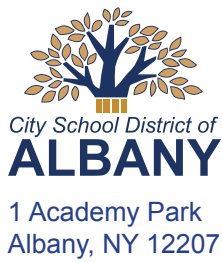


Falcon turning Saint Ahniysha "Baby" Jackson (center)

## Board of Education

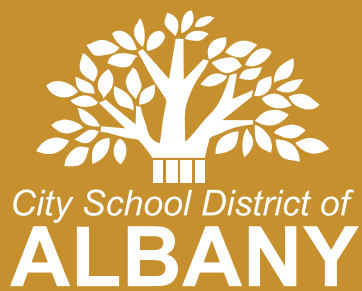
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You can access all the information  
in this newsletter and more at:  
[albanschools.org](http://albanschools.org)



## Our guiding principles

### Our vision

The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.

### Our mission

The mission of the City School District of Albany is to work in partnership with

our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

### Our goals

Increase student achievement; Enhance the delivery of quality instruction; Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability; Empower families; Partner with our diverse community

## Leading the way:

# Peggy Morehouse

*Speech-language pathologist*



Peggy Morehouse was instrumental in developing Language Intervention for Tomorrow (LIFT), a sought-after City School District of Albany program designed to jump-start the vocabulary, communication and language comprehension skills of young learners.

Morehouse, a veteran in her field of speech-language pathology, began LIFT in 2013 as a pilot at Giffen Memorial Elementary School. The original group had dramatic improvement, so a district team of speech-language pathologists and teachers expanded the program to four more schools. Today all kindergarteners in those schools receive LIFT.

The program has gained nationwide traction among educators since Morehouse spoke about it at a peer conference in 2018. Developing and implementing it is the highlight of her 36-year career, she said.

### Q: What is the connection between literacy and speech-language pathology?

Research indicates that developing a large and robust vocabulary is central to learning to read. Children must know the challenging words that make up books in order to understand them, and speech-language pathologists know how to build foundational language skills that are essential for reading success.

### Q: How does LIFT work?

LIFT is part of an English Language Arts station hour in kindergarten. Groups of students rotate between the classroom teacher, reading teacher and speech pathologist for small group instruction. The speech pathologist also conducts a lesson for the entire class once a week, and interns from The College of Saint Rose provide extra support.

### Q: How has LIFT helped district children?

LIFT has ensured district children a language-rich start to their education. Targeted vocabulary is used by all educators, and there are high expectations for students to use their newly learned words throughout the day. LIFT fosters a love of language, conversation and books.

### Q: Why is it important to focus language enrichment efforts on younger children?

Oral language is one of the biggest predictors of literacy success. That's because from birth, our brains have been wired to acquire both speech and language skills. When these skills are strong, they directly support the acquisition of reading and writing. A child's ability to understand what they read greatly depends on their vocabulary skills.



## Alumni achievement

# Marisa Franchini '99

It took approximately 334 years for a female to be appointed chief legal counsel in the City of Albany. But when the city finally appointed a woman as corporation counsel on Jan. 1, she was an Albany High School graduate.

Mayor Kathy Sheehan named Marisa Franchini '99 to the city's top legal position – which oversees everything from resident complaints about a damaged garbage can to employee contract negotiations – because of her pragmatic legal sense, but also, in part, because of her strong connection to the city and its people.

"Albany is a great place to grow up and that is why I came back here to raise my own family," Franchini said. "I left for undergrad (Northeastern University) and law school (Loyola University of Chicago), but was always driven to return.

"Now I am lucky to be able to give back to my community and see the results every day."

While at Albany High, Franchini took

advantage of the school's varied offerings. She was active in everything from student government and athletics (soccer and softball) to Latin Club and Art Club.

"At Albany High I learned so much about leadership and the value of diversity," she said. "I found my 'niche' in many places. In these areas I got the chance to take on leadership roles and to work with all different types of people in productive and fun ways."

In fact, Franchini still relies on many of the skills she learned at Albany High, and the best part of her new job is knowing she's supporting a city that's truly her home.

"The great thing about working in and for the city is that I get to see firsthand the progress we are making," she said. "Having grown up here, it motivates me to keep striving to push the city forward."

Franchini lives in the Normanskill neighborhood with her husband and two future Falcons – their oldest will attend prekindergarten in the fall.