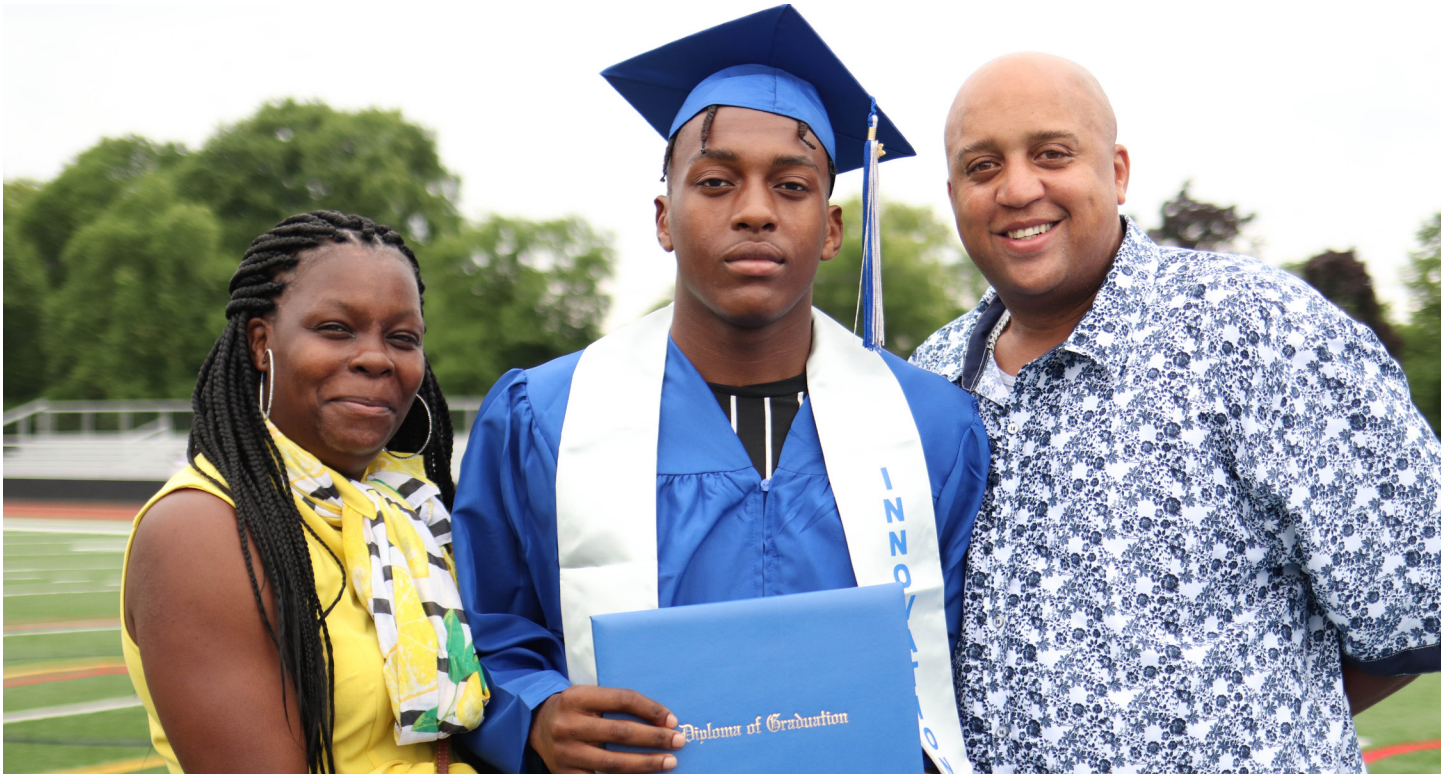




# Community Update

February 2021

An update for our community on important news and highlights from around the City School District of Albany.



## Albany High grad rate hits new milestone of 73%

The Albany High School Class of 2020 achieved the highest graduation rate in the 16 years of the state's current accountability system, with 73% of the class earning diplomas in four years. The State Education Department released its annual graduation data Jan. 14. Albany High's rate increased from 68%, where it had held steady for the classes of 2018 and 2019. That had been the school's highest rate since the state started measuring graduation under its current methodology in 2005.

Graduation rates increased statewide in 2020, with an overall increase of 1.7% from 2019. The statewide rate for 2020 was 84.8%. The 73% mark for Albany High's Class of 2020 represents a 7.4% increase from 2019. It is the seventh year in a row that Albany High's graduation rate has increased or held steady. Albany High's lowest graduation rate under the state's current methodology was 50% for the Class of 2010. The 2020 graduation rate represents a 46% increase since then.



## Instructional planning for spring, 2021-22

With COVID-19 rates declining and the state indicating that schools will receive full funding for the current school year on schedule, the district is planning to implement a modified hybrid instructional model for grades 7-12 beginning with the fourth marking period. Schools will schedule students in small groups for in-person instruction one or several days a week, continuing to emphasize all COVID-19 precautions. The district also will continue to provide a full distance learning option. The district will share more information as implementation gets closer. It also is important to note that these plans could change if Albany County experiences another COVID-19 surge, or if the state does not provide full funding as anticipated.

Looking ahead to next school year, the district's goal is to provide all students in grades 7-12 with the option of in-person learning – again, dependent on the status of the pandemic. If COVID-19 still requires the social distancing restrictions we face today, we anticipate that our middle and high schools will offer a hybrid format next fall. If COVID-19 no longer requires building capacity and staffing limitations, we would anticipate being able to return to in-person school more fully. We also anticipate continuing to provide a distance learning option for families. The district will provide more information about this planning in the spring.

Students in prekindergarten through grade 6, and all self-contained special education students, will continue to have the option of in-person instruction throughout this school year and for 2021-22 under the district's current models.

## Bridging the digital divide

The City School District of Albany received 5,200 Chromebooks from late December through late January and is continuing the process of distributing devices to students. Individual schools are continuing outreach and coordination with families of students still sharing a device at home. The district expects to achieve a 1:1 computing model by winter break.

The district remains grateful to the many community partners who have worked in recent months to help students and families get additional computers at home. These partners include Albany Fund for Education, Hannaford Supermarkets, Workforce Development Institute of the Capital Region, Albany Public School Administrators Association, Albany Housing Authority and Metropolitan Baptist Church. The district also is grateful to T-Mobile, including its Project 10 Million, and the Center for Educational Innovation for helping to provide hotspots to families who did not have an Internet connection at home.



## New equity, academic and community web content

The City School District of Albany has added a completely overhauled academics section, as well as Equity in Education page and Community dropdown menu to [albanyschools.org](http://albanyschools.org) to better organize web resources and serve all of our partners in these two important areas.

The new academic section provides a clear overview for families of what students will learn at each grade level, along with a look at all the unique programming available at Albany High School. The Equity in Education section includes links to the Board of Education’s foundational Equity in Education Policy, as well as to a video series highlighting the perspectives of our students, faculty and staff, and a variety of additional resources. A Community dropdown has also been added to our main navigational menu, and includes links to information about employment opportunities in the district, our Workforce Development initiative, the City School District of Albany Hall of Fame, Parent University, community resources and much more.

## COVID-19 surge in district mirrors county, region

Like school districts that serve communities throughout Albany County and the Capital Region, the City School District of Albany has experienced an increasing surge of COVID-19 cases through the fall and early winter. The district experienced a daily average of less than one case per day in October and November. In December, the daily average increased to 2.9 cases, and the daily average for January increased to 4.4 cases. The daily average for February had declined to three per day through Feb. 7.

The current surge intensified while schools were closed for the holiday break. The December daily average jumped from 2.4 per day from Dec. 1-22 to 4.2 per day from Dec. 23-31. In response, the district transitioned all students to distance learning for the first week of school after the break, Jan. 4-8. The district implemented a voluntary COVID-19 testing program when students and employees returned to in-person instruction Jan. 11. Through Feb. 5, the district tested 400 in-person individuals with no positive results among those tests.



# Board approves high-risk sports

Albany High School student-athletes in basketball, hockey and competitive cheerleading got the go-ahead to begin practice for an abbreviated winter season Feb. 9 following approval from the City School District of Albany Board of Education.

The board gave the green light to sports that the state has deemed high-risk due to COVID-19. The board's approval came one day after Albany County cleared school districts to offer high-risk sports because the county's COVID-19 infection rate has dropped below 4%. In addition to the high-risk winter sports that started official practices Feb. 10, the board's approval allowed Albany High to offer the following high-risk sports later this school year along with the regularly scheduled low- and moderate-risk sports (JV and varsity teams, unless otherwise noted). Fall 2 season high-risk sports (practice begins March 1) include football and volleyball, and Spring season high-risk sports (practice begins May 2) includes boys' lacrosse.

# Perfection once again for Albany High bowling

Perfection is becoming a habit for the Albany High School bowling team. Junior Delon Dean rolled a perfect game in the Falcons' win over Niskayuna in January. It's the third time in five years that an Albany High bowler has rolled a 300 in competition, and the fifth time overall. Current teammate Michael McNeil threw 12 strikes in a row against Shenendehowa in January 2019, and former Falcon Jahlil Young also achieved the highest possible score in December 2016 against CBA. Prior to that, it had been a decade since an Albany High bowler had a perfect game.

Two other current and past Falcon bowling team members also rolled 300s during offseason competition. Senior Jedrek Arasim in March 2019 and Class of 2020's Eliza Arasim in January 2018.



## 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 • Partner with our diverse community  
Build our leadership capacity and increase accountability  
Empower families • Enhance the delivery of quality instruction



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