

NEWS from Port Jervis

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kindergartners benefit from full day of instruction

Kindergarten students now have more than three extra hours a day to learn and play.

On Sept. 5, Port Jervis welcomed 215 children to the first day of its new full-day kindergarten program.

The expanded session is replacing the half-day programs at Anna S. Kuhl and Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Schools.

HBE kindergarten teacher Beth Polanis says she's glad to have more time with her students. "You really couldn't do



much with the children in two and one-half hours," notes Polanis. Now, she says she has the entire day to focus on important skills such as reading and math.

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Alternatives to land purchase proposal

Board of Education seeking public input

The proposal to spend \$360,000 of the school district's capital reserve funds to purchase property in the Town of Deerpark to build a new transportation facility was defeated Aug. 15.

The Board of Education held public hearings Sept. 5 and Sept. 19 to seek input from the community regarding the failed land vote and to find an alternative solution to the ongoing need to build a new transportation facility.

The existing bus garage/maintenance facility, which is located adjacent to

Anna S. Kuhl Elementary School, suffered irreparable damage in the April 2005 flood. The New York State Education Department has directed the district to find a new location for the facility.

Residents, who were unable to attend the public hearing, are invited to provide the district with feedback pertaining to the transportation facility. The school board has posted a brief survey on the district web site: PortJervisCSD.k12.ny.us. Residents can also contact Assistant Superintendent for Business Lorelei Case at 858-3180 or lcase@pj.ouboces.org.

- 2** High School & Middle School welcome new assistant principals
- 4** Go Raiders! The return of Junior Varsity Sports

Visit PJ schools on the Web:
PortJervisCSD.k12.ny.us

Calendar of EVENTS

October

- 3** PJMS PTA meeting Room 102, 6 p.m.
School Board meeting PJHS Cafeteria, 7 p.m.
- 5** PJHS Open House
- 9** Columbus Day - **Schools Closed**
- 11** ASK PTA meeting, 7 p.m.
- 13-14** **Homecoming Weekend**
- 17** **School Board meeting** PJHS cafeteria, 7 p.m.
 PJHS PTSA meeting Cafeteria, 7 p.m.
- 18** **Half-day for students** Staff Training
- 25** HBE PTA meeting Library, 6:30 p.m.
- 31** Elementary Schools: Early Dismissal, 11 a.m. Parent-Teacher Conferences

November

- 7** Superintendent's Conference Day - **Schools Closed**
- 8** ASK PTA meeting, 7 p.m.
- 9** PJHS Report Cards Mailed
- 10** Veterans Day (observed) **Schools Closed**

inside

Expanded program provides more time for learning, socialization

In short...

Parent Teacher Association

The PTA is a vital link between home and school.

PTA meetings are held monthly at all Port Jervis schools. For more information on the meetings, contact your child's school office or PTA President.

PTA Presidents

PJ High School

Sophie Crawford

PJ Middle School

Jodi Wesley

ASK Elementary School

Genni Cornell

HBE Elementary School

Lisa Buczek

"Research shows that the benefits of full-day kindergarten are overwhelming. All day programs provide children with opportunities to spend more time actively engaged in educational and social activities," says John Bell, assistant superintendent for instruction.

The young students now have time for more hands-on learning, more guided practice, more inquiry, and more self-development.

Bell says children who are involved in these types of educational activities typically demonstrate significant gains in their academic, social, and emotional development. They are also generally better prepared for first grade and future grades.

"The more time we have with students in their younger years, the more successful they will be throughout school," notes Bell.

Recognizing the benefits of the expanded classroom time, the New York State Education Department is investing in early childhood education by providing grants and state aid to districts implementing full-day kindergarten programs.

Port Jervis is taking full advantage of the available resources. As a result, the cost of the new full-day program is minimal.



HBE kindergartner Arthur Blair enjoys breakfast in his classroom on the first day of school. The new kindergarten schedule is designed to provide students with "down" time. In addition to breakfast and lunch breaks, 30 minutes is set aside every day for quiet activities such as listening to music or reading stories.

"We are utilizing existing classrooms and, since teachers were reassigned from different grade levels - no new staff was hired," explains Bell.

Start-up costs for the program - that included minor classroom modifications and the purchase of instructional materials - will be reimbursed through state aid.

"This is really a win-win situation," says Bell. "The full-day program will have a tremendous impact on the children in this community with very little financial impact on the district's operating expenses."

Enrollment in the full-day kindergarten is open this year to all children in the school district who will turn 5 years old by Dec. 1, 2006.

The research is in!

Benefits of full-day kindergarten include:

Quality time. Provides children with more individual and small-group interaction with teachers.

Greater reading growth. Children experience significantly greater growth in pre-reading and math skills.

Better prepared for first-grade and future school success. Expanded day creates more opportunities for engaged, active educational activities.

Meeting individual needs. Provides more time for teachers to get to know students and their needs.

Higher social skills. More child-to-child interactions enable students to develop better social skills. Children experience more independent learning, classroom involvement, and productivity in work with peers.

Closes achievement gap. At-risk students make greater progress in language proficiency, significantly reducing need for grade retention in primary grades.

Need more information?

For answers to questions about kindergarten registration or the new full-day program, please call the District Office, 858-3177.

New assistant principals bring wealth of experience to Port Jervis schools



The district's two new assistant principals come from distinctly different backgrounds,

but they both have similar goals - to enhance curriculum and to motivate students to succeed.

A native New Yorker, John Solimando comes to Port Jervis High School from Staten Island where he taught language arts for 10 years and then served as an assistant principal at two intermediate schools.

Solimando, who holds both a master's degree and administrative certification from the College of Staten Island, spent six years working at Intermediate School 49, a tough inner city school that drew kids from two rival housing projects.

When Solimando started at IS49, school wasn't a priority for the majority of students. He says "most of them were just looking for a way to survive."

That all changed with the help of a new principal, who was determined to turn the school around.

"A magnet school program, based in technology, was created. And, students were given opportunities - during and after school - to excel academically through the use of technology," explains Solimando.



High School Assistant Principal John Solimando

Within a few years, IS49 went from being known as one of Staten Island's worst schools to becoming one of the best.

Proud of the positive effect the changes had on students, Solimando - who is relocating to the area with his wife Rosemary and their 18-month-old daughter, AnnMarie - is looking forward to working with



Middle School Assistant Principal Cynthia Benedict

the Port Jervis High School staff to enhance student learning.

Middle School Assistant Principal Cynthia Benedict has spent her entire career working

with children in Orange County - as a maternity nurse at Horton Hospital and later as an educator in two high performing school districts.

While her two children - Kristopher and Kara - were growing up, Benedict taught in the Minisink Valley School District for 19 years. Wanting to do more for education, Benedict headed back to school - to the College of New Rochelle and then Long Island University, to earn advanced degrees and get certified as an education administrator.

Last year, as an assistant principal at Warwick Valley Middle School, Benedict accomplished her goal by helping Warwick students to once again score well above the state and regional averages on the New York State assessment tests.

Benedict, who also coached modified cross country while she was in Minisink, says she thoroughly enjoys working with this age group.

"The students are growing up, yet they are at a point in their lives that you can make still a difference," she explains.

Benedict, who resides in Mount Hope with her husband Gary, will now use her experience to help make a difference in the lives of Port Jervis kids.

In short...

Port Jervis welcomes new staff

ASK Elementary School:
Patricia Eckert,
Vocal teacher

Heather Shaffer,
Fifth grade teacher

PJ Middle/High School:
Kyle Ross,
Special Education

Port Jervis High School:
Helen Cahill,
Foreign Language teacher

Randi Liberati,
Business teacher

Jacqueline March,
English teacher

Michelle Maresca,
Foreign Language teacher

Taiya Negron,
Foreign Language teacher

District:
Victoria Slaughter,
District Psychologist

Thomas Preiskines,
School Lunch Director

Scott Reichert,
Technical Integration Specialist

Joseph Busse,
Computer Specialist

Go Raiders!! Port's junior varsity sports are back

Port Jervis welcomes the return of the following junior varsity sports:

Boys

Football,
Basketball
Baseball
Wrestling

Girls

Soccer
Tennis
Volleyball
Softball,
Cheerleading
for Football
and Basketball

The Junior Varsity athletic program is back in full swing.

The program, which was cut to reduce spending under the 2005-06 austerity budget, has been reinstated - enabling more than 150 9th and 10th graders to return to Port Jervis playing fields.

"This will be a rebuilding year for our JV program," says Athletic Director Bob Corvino.

"Typically, it takes one or

two years to rebuild total athletic programs after they have been affected by austerity cuts," explains Corvino.

"Since we tried to keep as many kids as possible involved last year by letting them play at the modified or varsity levels, we hope the affect is minimal."

Corvino says he expects the junior varsity athletes will receive a lot of support from the community. "Port Jervis is a sports town, and the people have always been very supportive of the Raider athletic programs," notes Corvino.

Schedules for the junior varsity, varsity, and modified programs are available on the Orange County Interscholastic Athletic Association web site: <http://ociaa.ouboces.org/>



New location for school tax payments

The location to pay school taxes in person has changed. Walk-in payments can now be made at TD Banknorth, located at 205 East Main Street in Port Jervis. Payments will be accepted during regular banking hours: Monday-Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Bank of New York is no longer processing payments.

For the convenience of taxpayers, the School Tax Collector will be at TD Banknorth weekdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sept. 11 through Nov. 3, and Saturday, Sept. 30, to offer assistance and answer questions. The Tax Collector can be reached weekdays at 858-3185.

Since the Tax Collector will be at TD Banknorth assisting tax payers, walk-in payments will not be accepted at the District Office on Thompson Street. School taxes may be paid through Oct. 2 without penalty.



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Port Jervis SCHOOL DISTRICT

9 Thompson Street
Port Jervis, New York 12771

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