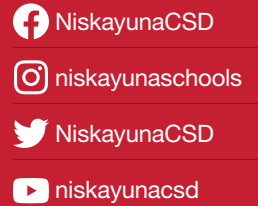




YOUR | FALL 2022 SCHOOLS



Restaurateur Aneesa Waheed cooks up life lessons and Moroccan food in Culinary Arts

The warm fragrance of paprika, cumin, coriander and turmeric filled the culinary arts room in the high school.

The spice blend, called ras el hanout in Arabic, which translates to “head of the shop,” is a staple of Moroccan cooking. Each blend is unique to the restaurant, family or company that makes it, and this particular blend was crafted by Aneesa Waheed, chef and owner of Tara Kitchen. Waheed visited the Beginning Culinary Arts class for a cooking demonstration of chicken tagine with preserved lemon and green olives.

“Food is such a great way to experience a different country. We might not be able to go there, but if you can eat the food, it brings us closer,” Waheed said. Waheed invited students to prepare the dish alongside her as she shared some of the history of Moroccan cuisine and her experience of finding a career in cooking. The demonstration ended with a lunchtime tasting of the freshly made tagine.

“I actually want to try more of Moroccan food and cuisine. It was very delicious,” ninth grader Antwann Allen said. “It was my first time ever having it at all.”

Waheed, a Schenectady High School graduate whose career began in graphic design and technology, opened Tara Kitchen in Schenectady in 2012 and, since then, opened additional locations in Troy and Albany. She recently published a cookbook and is set to open another restaurant in New York City.



Sparking community at VA

Van Antwerp Middle School’s annual Community Day on Oct. 7 encouraged students to give back while having fun. Dozens of workshops engaged students in activities ranging from yoga to robotics. This year, eighth grade students also participated in a service learning project supporting community organizations including the Regional Food Bank and the Cornell Cooperative Extension.

“This day is all about building community in and outside of the school,” Van Antwerp school counselor Megan McCarthy said. “The hope is to give students an opportunity to try something new. By approaching workshops and service opportunities with an open mind, they may see things in a different light.”

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NISKAYUNA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent's Update



Greetings! When we welcomed our students and staff back to school in September, we recognized that the moment represented more than a simple return to school—it was an opportunity for all of us to get “back to Nisky.” This fall provided us

with an opportunity to return to the things we missed so dearly during the pandemic: athletic contests, field trips, science labs, concerts and musicals, sharing meals, and other opportunities to engage with one another in a safe, collaborative, and welcoming school environment.

We’ve experienced a terrific start to the school year and I’ve enjoyed getting to know our students, their families, and our dedicated employees. As I’ve visited classrooms, dropped by on “back to school” nights, attended ice cream socials, cheered on our Silver Warriors at athletic contests and cooked chicken tagine with our culinary students, I’ve learned what “back to Nisky” really means for our students and families!

Emerging from this long pandemic, our work as educators has taken on new importance. We are focused on our students’ social-emotional as well as academic needs.

We are committed to a learning and work environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We are guided by our vision and we deliver on our EPIC mission every day:



Superintendent Mummenthey greets Craig Elementary School first grade student Cephyiah Ellsworth as she steps off the bus on the first day of school.

we empower our students and staff, we persevere; we innovate; and we connect!

Autumn is a season of transition—and also a season of thanks. This autumn, I am thankful for the opportunity to lead and serve the Niskayuna Central School District as your superintendent. I take great pride in the outstanding achievements of our students, the dedication and expertise of our faculty and staff, and the steadfast support of our community and taxpayers. I extend my warmest Thanksgiving wishes to you and yours—and thank you for your support of our students!

Carl J. Mummenthey
Superintendent of Schools

Leadership Appointments

We’ve welcomed many new and talented leaders to our Niskayuna team this year. Recent additions include:



Thomas Fyvie,
Principal of
Iroquois Middle
School.

Mr. Fyvie brings a wealth of experience

to Iroquois and Niskayuna. For the past 10 years, he served as an Assistant Principal at Scotia-Glenville High School, where he also served as Director of Guidance for grades 6-12.



Andrea Marques-Clarke,
Director of
Secondary Special
Education.

Ms. Marques-Clarke brings 30 years of

experience in the field of special education to our district. She previously served as an Academy Principal at the City School District of Albany, where she led the growth and success of the Career and Technical Education courses at Albany High School.



Matthew Petrin,
Director of Human
Resources.

Mr. Petrin has over 14 years of experience

in the human resources field, most recently serving as Human Resources Administrator at the City School District of Albany. His leadership experiences span the public, private and non-profit sectors.

“When I asked her about it, there’s a lot of careers she went through,” Antwann said. “You don’t have to decide what you want to be and focus on that right now. You can search around and find what career you want to do.”

“Don’t be stagnant. Keep moving. Keep trying to do new things. Keep talking to people, reading books, going to places and exploring. Having not done a lot of that stuff, I wouldn’t have found this,” Waheed said of her career path and discovery of a passion for cooking.

High school teachers Leah Werther, English, and Heather O’Keefe, Culinary Arts, organized the guest lesson.

“It’s wonderful for students to have this experience and learn from a guest because the last two years, we weren’t able to do that,” O’Keefe said. “Along with learning about some of the history and geography of Morocco, students were able to review protocols for handling food.”

Werther is serving this year as a teacher on a special assignment in support of the district’s Strategic Plan for Equity. This position is made possible by federal relief funds (ARP-ESSER) designed to support students and schools. In addition to this collaboration with the Culinary Arts program, Werther is partnering with high school teachers to design curriculum and review units of instruction through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.

“The federal funds that Niskayuna received have been critical in supporting students throughout the pandemic and as we continue to address unfinished learning,” said Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Marie Digirolamo. “Funds are being used to provide enhanced academic support; social and emotional support; professional development for faculty and staff; and strategic investments in curriculum, materials and equipment.”

Werther is planning additional learning opportunities connecting students with special guests like authors and local artists. She is organizing a writer-in-residence program in April that will feature Brendan Kiely, New York Times bestselling co-author of “All American Boys.”



Nisky Voices

At New Teacher Orientation this fall, we asked: Why did you want to work at Nisky?



“Niskayuna is in really close proximity to some excellent research facilities and I am looking forward to partnering with those and using those resources to bring science to life and make it real for our kids.”

Kristen Reck

Science Teacher, Iroquois Middle School



“As a former Nisky student I have nothing but positive memories and I remember how much I enjoyed it. I had so many great teachers and I am excited to work with them. Some of them are still here. This is amazing.”

Michael Audi, ‘10

Fourth Grade Teacher,
Glenclyff Elementary School



“As someone who has grown up in the Capital Region and has taught in several districts in the region, Niskayuna is definitely one that is admired. I was looking to work for a district that really respected my background and my experience and I found that here at Nisky.”

Brooke Degener

Special Education Teacher,
Van Antwerp Middle School



“I heard Niskayuna has a very strong, very supportive World Language Department. I am very excited to build the curriculum and make the Chinese program stronger. I am very very excited to support students in the International Scholars Program, which includes several students from China this year. I can help some of the students to get more comfortable in our community.”

Ruijuan Steinberg

Chinese Teacher,
Niskayuna High School



Scan to watch
cooking demo video.



RIGHT “I believe that we will win” echoed throughout the high school’s new gym during the annual pep rally. Go Silver Warriors! Student-athletes (L to R) Gautum Kurien, Matt LaVigne, Ame Bender, Asa Crosdale, Isaiah Linyear.



ABOVE Third grader Twisha Mishra Bharadwaj pauses to smile at the camera while Mrs. Colby’s class lines up for P.E. on the first day of school at Craig.

Niskayuna Snapshots

Back-to-Nisky!

BELOW Second grade selfie! Students in Mrs. Guest’s class get together to make a memory during Glenclyff’s Get Along Gathering. The traditional school celebration on September 16 provided an opportunity for school-wide community building. Classes were “buddied up” with a different grade level and these partnerships will continue all year long.

BELOW VA students Elin Forde (right) and Julia Madden ponder all things sixth grade during orientation.





LEFT PAWsome partnership! Students Tarik Dogan (left) and Linda Bulger visit with Taffy the therapy dog during the Extended School Year program.

BELOW “Start With Hello!” Birchwood Elementary School students were encouraged to connect with new classmates and practice kindness and inclusion. Fourth grader Alara Bornholdt holds up a note for the “Shine Wall”, where students shared examples of times they saw their peers make a connection throughout the week.



ABOVE Breakfast for lunch! Rosendale kitchen manager Krystal Davis pulls a tray of french toast out of the oven, filling the entire cafeteria with the comforting smell of cinnamon.



LEFT Iroquois eighth graders Santino Varrone (left) and Thomas D'Allaird light up when they see engineering technology teacher Aditya Rajmane in the hall.

Awards and Achievements



Coach Bryce Colby inducted into the NYS High School Girls Soccer Hall of Fame

Iroquois Middle School art teacher and longtime girls varsity soccer coach **Bryce Colby** was officially elected into the New York State High School Girls' Soccer Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony took place Sept. 10 at Niskayuna High School.

Colby, who also serves as the co-vice president of the New York State Sportswriters and Coaches Organization for Girls Sports Hall of Fame, is part of the sixth overall induction class.

Five Niskayuna High School seniors named National Merit Semifinalists



Congratulations to **Anna E. Brown, Elizabeth Peng, Smyan Sengupta, Grace Z. Sun and Vidhu Bulumulla** who were recognized among the top high school seniors in the country. Nationwide, fewer than one percent of high school seniors are named National Merit Semifinalists.

"I want to congratulate each of our student semifinalists. This is a recognition of all of their tremendous accomplishments and hard work over their academic careers," High School Principal John Rickert said.

Finalists are selected based on their PSAT scores, academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment, and honors and awards received. Finalists are announced in the winter, and scholarship winners are announced in the spring.



Middle school students recognized in national science competition

Jason Lian and Andrew Zhang of Iroquois Middle School and **Brian Sun** of Van Antwerp Middle School were recognized as top 300 finalists in the Broadcom MASTERS national middle school science competition. They were coached by Iroquois Middle School science teacher **Kate Leto**.

Their project, *What Is the Best Way To Optimize a Catapult?*, explored concepts like energy conservation and kinematics. The trio also earned second place in the Junior Division at the Greater Capital Region Science and Engineering Fair and a finalist spot at the STANYS State Science Congress.

Two Niskayuna faculty members receive New York State English Council awards

Award winners show a commitment to excellence, innovation, and creativity in teaching, mentoring, and learning.



Nancy Czachor (Van Antwerp) was awarded Middle School Teacher of Excellence. Each year the New York State English Council recognizes excellence in teaching by presenting Awards at its annual conference to English Language Arts educators nominated by their schools and then selected by the Council. Only one other teacher in the state was given the middle school award.



Donna McAndrews (High School) received the Library/Media Specialist of Excellence award. This award recognizes a Library/Media Specialist who cultivates a passion for reading, takes significant steps to provide students with diverse and inclusive texts, and who fosters research and student inquiry in collaboration with classroom teachers. McAndrews is the inaugural recipient and sole award recipient this year.

Our Schools. Our Future.

Capital Project Update

Construction set to begin at Iroquois Middle School

In October, the board of education approved bids for Phase 2A of the capital project, which will include new construction and extensive renovation at the Iroquois Middle School campus. This is a critical and exciting next step in realizing the district's vision for a reconfigured and redesigned middle school program.

The work at Iroquois will include constructing 20 new classrooms and renovating 86,000 square feet of existing classrooms. The work will transform Iroquois into a future-ready learning environment for our district's seventh and eighth grade students. Site work is expected to begin by December, and by next spring, construction will be well underway. Work at Iroquois is expected to be substantially completed by the summer of 2026.

Due to the historic inflationary pressures and supply chain disruptions we are experiencing, the bids awarded by the board for the Iroquois work exceed the costs of the project that were anticipated years ago, prior to the pandemic. This phenomenon of higher-cost construction is a global concern that's confronting schools, commercial clients, and homeowners

across our country. As a result of this inflationary pressure, the board has approved allocating sufficient funding for the Iroquois project. That means that the planned work at Van Antwerp Middle School must be phased over two separate capital projects—the project voters approved in 2021 and a referendum planned for 2024.

The project at Iroquois, along with renovations planned for Van Antwerp Middle School (Phase 2B of the capital project), are necessary to get the buildings ready for the district's planned grade-level configuration: five K-4 elementary schools, a grade 5-6 lower middle school at Van Antwerp and a grade 7-8 upper middle school at Iroquois.

Securing the funding needed to provide future-ready learning spaces for all 5-6 middle school students at Van Antwerp will require additional voter approval.

"When the district contemplated a reconfiguration of our middle school grade spans several years ago, district leaders acknowledged that we would need to make substantial new investments in our Iroquois and Van Antwerp campuses," Superintendent Carl Mumenthey said. "We remain committed to a major investment at Van Antwerp and will be working very hard to redesign our construction phasing and our construction budgets to ensure that the work gets done."



Significant work has been completed on replacing aging roofs (Glenciff, NHS, Rosendale, Transportation Building) and upgrading mechanical systems (Birchwood, Craig, Glenciff, Hillside, NHS) in Phases 1A and 1C. The side-by-side comparison shows the Glenciff Elementary School roof before and after renovations.

Phase 1B work underway

The transformation of our outdoor high school athletic facility is progressing steadily. A new, enlarged multi-sport synthetic turf field will be completed by December. A new track is being installed in phases. The track's blacktop has been laid down, and the completion date depends heavily on the weather.

The project also aims to improve traffic flow and accessibility through roadway improvements, pedestrian enhancements, and additional parking. A new parking lot completed in September added 136 spaces to the facility.

Construction at the high school continues on the new home of the Silver Warriors.



Niskayuna

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YOUR SCHOOLS

| FALL 2022

EMPOWER • PERSEVERE • INNOVATE • CONNECT

On June 22,
the Class of 2022
graduated at
the MVP Arena
(formerly Times
Union Center) in
downtown Albany.



Nisky-by-the-Numbers

| The Class of 2022

303
GRADUATES

44
EARNED THE SEAL OF
BILITERACY

33
NCAA
STUDENT-ATHLETES

237
ADVANCED REGENTS
DIPLOMAS

248
ATTENDING 2-YEAR OR
4-YEAR COLLEGE

3
HIGH SCHOOL
ALL-AMERICANS

10
NATIONAL MERIT
SEMIFINALISTS

4
ENTERED
MILITARY SERVICE

8
ATTENDING COLLEGE FOR
FINE/PERFORMING ARTS

9
PURSUING TRADE
SCHOOL OR FULL-TIME
EMPLOYMENT



Barry Rouse, Niskayuna Central School District Bus Driver

We are hiring!

Join our team of dedicated and caring school support professionals! The Niskayuna Central School District has immediate and anticipated openings in the areas below:

- Teaching assistants
- School nurse substitutes
- School bus drivers
- Substitutes in all areas!
- Food service helpers



Come work in a friendly, caring,
student-centered environment.

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