

# FULTON IN TOUCH

**FULTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**2023 WINTER NEWSLETTER**

## GRB students inducted into National Honor Society



Nearly 50 G. Ray Bodley High School students were recently celebrated for their successes inside and outside the classroom, earning membership into the National Honor Society.

The students were inducted into the prestigious organization after meeting a rigorous set of criteria, from academic excellence to participating in volunteer activities. According to GRB NHS advisor Nate Fasulo, each inductee earned the distinction by exhibiting the four pillars of NHS: scholarship, leadership, service and character.

Fulton City School District Deputy Superintendent Geri Geitner lauded the students for their accomplishments and encouraged them to create a sense of belonging while acknowledging it is safe to speak up. These values, which are part of the district's theme for the school year, are among the many traits the inductees embody.

"You each bring so many strengths to the work ahead of us," Geitner said. "You

have already demonstrated those strengths through your academic accomplishments, your service to others and your admirable character. Your challenge is to use this leadership opportunity and the power of your positive influence to create space for others to feel they belong, to feel free to speak up and know they will be heard and to know that their contributions also matter to all of us."

Following Geitner's speech, NHS officers discussed the four pillars of membership and introduced the inductees. Each new member recited the NHS pledge and lit a candle signifying their induction into the organization.

This year's inductees were: Geena Abbott, Paige Ball, Laura Bartlett, Rylee Bartlett, Olivia Bauer, Anna Bednarz, Alexis Bush, Lauren Bush, Paityn Cali, Charlie Chen, Harper Ellis, Gabriela Farnham, Natalie Frost, Ella Halladay, William Hartle, Linda Hartmann, Kyle Hood, Beverly Hotchkiss, Bryanna Howard, Grace Hutton, Mackenzie



*GRB National Honor Society inductees hold candles signifying their membership into the organization.*

Kerfien, Zoey Kerr, Grace Kilpatrick, Dawson Krause, Joely LaPage, Grady Marshall, Rebekah May, Abigail Miner, Reese Niver, Riley Niver, Grace Olon, Ciara Orr, Ellie Parkhurst, Moira Percival, Addison Pickard, Evelyn Rupert, Leanna Rupert, Dykel Ruscitto, Vincent Salerno, Christian Santee, Alyssa Sawyer, Adyson Shepard, Rylee Spencer, Ashley Taplin, Conor Tibbetts, Aiden Trude and Abigail Waters.

An induction ceremony for new members of the National Junior Honor Society will take place at 6 p.m. March 27 in the GRB auditorium.



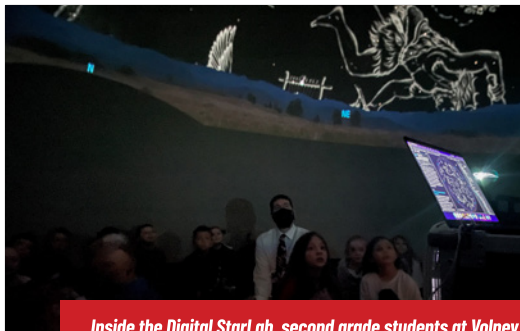
Second grade students at Volney Elementary climb inside the Digital StarLab to learn about the wonders of astronomy.



## Fulton Students Seeing Stars with In-House Planetarium Visits

Students in Fulton elementary schools have been exploring the galaxy throughout the month of February thanks to a unique opportunity available through a collaboration with OCM BOCES.

The mobile program is hosted by BOCES instructor John Clancy and features an inflatable Digital StarLab planetarium dome that brings the night sky to life through a projection system. Throughout February, students at Volney, Fairgrieve, Granby and Lanigan elementary schools have been able to climb inside and learn about astronomy. Students were fascinated by new understandings of famous constellations and unique perspectives on familiar planets.



Inside the Digital StarLab, second grade students at Volney Elementary learn about the origins of the constellations and their names from the perspective of the Ancient Greeks.

"I thought it was cool because we could actually see the sky change from day to night," said Volney fifth-grader Caymen Austin. "And we could actually see the constellations and the zodiac images that the ancient Greeks imagined."

Clancy, himself a former public educator who travels with the planetarium, instructs various grade levels on several different topics. Presentations include information on the causes of day and night, the changes of the lunar phases, the use of stars to navigate on earth, and the history of the constellations since Ancient Greece. Older audiences enjoy studies of seasonal changes, solar and lunar eclipses, and the layout of the solar system.

Clancy worked with students at GRB High School and the advanced earth science classes at Fulton Junior High earlier in the year.

## FCSD Begins Community Leadership Collaborative with Local Leaders

Fulton City School District has taken a proactive step to address numerous concerns by rallying together district and community leaders in a new Community Leadership Collaborative.

On Feb. 15, district Superintendent Brian Pulvino and school officials gathered virtually with city and county leaders in the first of several sessions. Known as the Community Leadership Collaborative, the group met to try and identify solutions to meet the needs of both students and the community, building on the district's longstanding commitment to its community school framework. Of key concern were increased levels of emotional dysregulation, physical and verbal aggression and conflict, substance abuse, and excessive absences seen within district students. Such concerns have been on the rise since the pandemic in Fulton and elsewhere in the county.

Alongside district administrators and board members, attendees included Fulton Mayor Deana Michaels, FPD Chief Michael Curtis, FFD Chief Adam Howard, District Attorney Greg Oakes, County Attorney Del Guile and numerous officials from the Department of Social Services, Farnham Family Services, Office of Mental Hygiene, and Oswego County Prevention Coalition.

"There was a clear recognition by all meeting participants," said Pulvino, "that what we're experiencing in our schools is a function of the challenges we're facing in the greater community."

By all accounts, the meeting was notably productive, with several attendees voicing their opinion that all school districts should be hosting similar talks to better utilize local resources.

"Bravo to Fulton in reaching out across disciplines to collaborate with your community partners in developing strategies to better serve the children and youth in the Fulton School District," said Stacy Alvord, Commissioner of the Oswego County Department of Social Services.

After discussing concerns and examining data, the group made great strides to establish clear action steps of how best to proceed. Such solutions included responses both within the district and within the community at large. While resolutions ranged from major city and county initiatives to limiting student electronics use, continued connections and communication between the school district and local agencies was the greatest theme moving forward.

"I'm very grateful," Pulvino said, "for so many community leaders and outside agencies to come together and support all our students. We will continue to work together to create the safest, healthiest and most beneficial learning environment for our students."

A second meeting has not yet been scheduled, but several additional community agencies and leaders have already expressed their desire to join the growing collaborative.



# FCSD Continues its Partnership with the REV Theatre to Bring the Arts to Life



Fulton schools have been happy to welcome the REV Theatre Co. back for the 2022-23 school year. After being temporarily ended by the global pandemic, the program has returned to rekindle a tradition that has been in place for more than two decades.

In early December, the third-grade students at Fulton Elementary schools were treated to a performance of "For Carmen in San Sebastián," a play by Kyle Adkins. Set in Puerto Rico after a destructive hurricane, Teo, a burro, and Luna, a dog, are set on making a difference on the island before moving to New York City. When Luna is asked to deliver a book through the forest, the pair get caught up in a far larger adventure. The story strongly emphasizes the themes

of community, family and citizenship, with colorful sets and characters that engaged and excited its young audience.

Performances like these are common in Fulton elementary schools thanks to a much larger "REV on Tour" educational outreach program hosted by the REV Theatre Company of Auburn. Each year, the program reaches more than 70 school districts and 75,000 students across New York state. At all Fulton schools, dramatic performances align with state educational standards and assist in classroom lessons and creative workshops before and after the production.

"The program is a wonderful way for our district to help ensure that the NYS arts standards are being met," said Tom Briggs,

a teacher at Granby Elementary and the district's Arts in Education Coordinator. Each year, Briggs helps to facilitate the program's funding through the BOCES-backed Arts in Education Program.

The REV has played an essential role in the FCSD for more than two decades, first beginning when the REV still operated as the Merry Go Round Playhouse. While temporarily suspended during the pandemic, the program has returned this year, offering a variety of performances and experiences to FCSD schools.

At Fulton elementary schools, specific programs exist for each grade level. In the fall, fourth-graders enjoyed a performance of "The Keeper's Voice," a play set against the backdrop of the Civil War and exploring the themes of civil rights. In January, fifth-graders experienced a drama based on the adventures of Amelia Earhart while first-graders enjoyed a rendition of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf." Other projects are more hands-on, asking students to organize their peers and resources to carry out a theatrical production in their own classrooms. All are deeply engaging and enjoyed by Fulton students.

"The REV does a phenomenal job, and our students thoroughly enjoy having them visit each year," noted Briggs. "We are very fortunate to have such an amazing resource available to our students."



FCSD enjoyed a fun-filled Valentine's Day last month. Students from Granby and Lanigan were happy to share a smile with us.





# FULTON IN TOUCH



## 100 Days of School!

*Last month, the kindergartners at FCSD celebrated their 100th day of school... Some of them even dressed like they were 100 years old! We're proud of all our kids for being 100 days smarter!*

## March is Music in Our Schools Month!

*Join us for amazing concerts all month long!*

**Wednesday, March 15, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

JHS MIOISM Seventh Grade Concert (at GRB)

**Thursday, March 16, 6:30-8 p.m.**

Eighth Grade Chorus & GRB Chorus MIOISM Concert (at GRB)

**Monday, March 20, 6-7 p.m.**

Lanigan Third Grade MIOISM Concert (at Lanigan)

**Tuesday, March 21, 6-7 p.m.**

Volney First and Second Grade MIOISM Concert (at Volney)

**Wednesday, March 22, 6-7 p.m.**

Granby Kindergarten MIOISM Concert (at Granby)

**Thursday, March 23, 6-7 p.m.**

Fairgrieve Fourth Grade MIOISM Concert (at Fairgrieve)

**Wednesday, March 29, 6:30-8 p.m.**

Eighth Grade Orchestra & GRB Orchestra MIOISM Concert (at GRB)

**Thursday, March 30, 6:30-8 p.m.**

Eighth Grade Band & GRB Band MIOISM Concert (at GRB)

## FULTON FOCUS ON

NEW DIRECTOR OF HUMANITIES

### RENEE HENDRICKSON

#### What brings you to FCSD?

I grew up in Fulton ... After graduation, I attended LeMoyne College, earned my degree in Special Education and started my career in the Fulton City School District at Volney Elementary. During this time, I also married my husband, Jeff, and soon after, bought a house in Fulton and started a family. I have been married for 27 years, have raised my kids in my hometown, and am proud to live and work in this community.

#### Describe the educational and professional journey that has led you to this point:

I had my first "real" job serving others when I worked for Oswego County Opportunities in the group home program for adults with developmental disabilities. It was there that one of the adults told me that she was told she would never be able to read. From then on, I decided that special education would become my career.

After earning my bachelor's degree in psychology and special education from LeMoyne, I went on to also earn my master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Oswego State. During this time, I worked as a special education teacher and a primary classroom teacher in kindergarten, first and second



world languages and support for speakers of other languages (ESOL). I do this by working with principals, teachers and coaches, creating opportunities for students to develop language skills through reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to become civically engaged, globally aware, and socially responsible. In other words, I try to help make learning engaging and fun!

#### What are you most looking forward to in working in this new capacity?

I am excited to support and build structures for teachers to create more connections between disciplines. I also hope that I can encourage teachers to make stronger connections with their students by approaching teaching and learning through an interdisciplinary lens. This lens puts an emphasis on the whole student and works to increase career and college readiness. The hope is that every student will engage in learning, have fun, and leave the district being prepared for life.

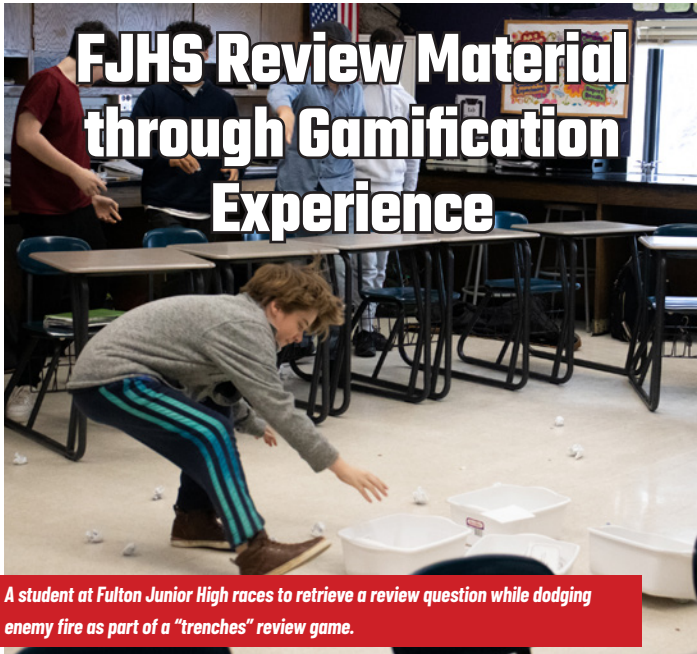
grades. After 22 years in the classroom, I worked as an instructional coach for the district for four years before becoming a director and assuming my current position.

#### What are your responsibilities as Director of Humanities?

I help to provide leadership with long-range planning, management and support for a cohesive curriculum at all grade levels. This includes instruction and assessment in the areas of literacy, English language arts, social studies,

*"You belong here. It is safe to speak up here. What we do is important."*

## FJHS Review Material through Gamification Experience



A student at Fulton Junior High races to retrieve a review question while dodging enemy fire as part of a "trenches" review game.

Quiz review may seem like a mundane activity for most, but in Allyson DeStevens' Advanced Regents Earth Science class at Fulton Junior High, such a lesson can be anything but. DeStevens has been incorporating elements of "gamification" into her lessons, taking cues from places as unlikely as escape rooms and theme parks.

In preparation for a recent quiz on weather factors, DeStevens' students participated in an activity called "Trenches," where four

groups of students hid behind desks representing their "nation's" boundaries. Brave students would then charge out into a "no man's land" between the desks to retrieve review questions, being careful to avoid "enemy fire" – crumpled balls of paper from the opposing teams. If a student didn't make it through the trenches unscathed, they faced one-on-one review questions from DeStevens herself.

"It was really fun!" said eighth-grader Ellie Hotchkiss after the review session. "Very engaging and competitive, but super fun!"

Classmate Tobin Zenor agreed. "It was a little bit more than different!"

The review game is one of many activities suggested in *EDrenaline Rush*, a book by author and English teacher John Meehan. Meehan is a strong proponent of increasing student engagement through gamification – the technique of incorporating game-like experiences into the classroom setting – and has written extensively on the topic. DeStevens has been leading a study of the book at Fulton JHS with English teacher Jennifer Meloling. The techniques Meehan presents have been increasingly common throughout the school, all aimed at increasing student participation.

"I really enjoyed this activity," DeStevens reflected on the "Trenches" game. "Anything that is relatively easy to set up and that gets the kids moving and out of their seat is definitely a win in my book. I will definitely do this again, except I want to try it in all my classes."

DeStevens has been teaching eighth grade science since September 2003. She looks forward to continuing to engage her students with more activities like these.

## Elementary Winter Concerts



Throughout January, FCSD elementary schools wowed audiences with their impressive musical talents. The Fairgrieve and Lanigan students shown here deserve another round of applause!



**Reminder that all school grounds are smoke free, which includes vehicles on school campuses.**





**Fulton City School District**

FCSD District Offices  
129 Curtis St.  
Fulton, New York 13069

*Non-Profit Organization  
PAID  
Fulton, NY 13069  
Permit 64*

**Board Members:**

Robbin Griffin, *President*  
Brenda Abalgore, *Vice President*  
Tim Conners  
Tim Crandell  
Dave Cordone, *CiTi Board Representative*  
Jennifer Mainville  
Jessica Pappalardo  
Mali Lamanna, *Student Representative*

**District Administration:**

**Brian Pulvino**, Superintendent  
**Geri Geitner**, Deputy Superintendent  
**Dominick Lisi**, Chief of Operations  
and Innovation  
**Marc Copani**, Director of Human Resources

## Postal Customer

## From the Desk of the Superintendent



**BRIAN T. PULVINO,**  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dear FCSD Families & Community Members,

It is hard to believe that we are at the mid-point of the 2022-23 school year. I want to extend my appreciation for the hard work and dedication of all stakeholders to ensure our district continues to provide a wide range of academic and extra-curricular

opportunities along with vital social-emotional and behavioral support for every student, every day. We have placed significant emphasis on the following beliefs in 2022-23: you belong here; it is safe to speak up here; and what we do is important. Coming together, valuing one another, being innovative problem solvers and taking risks together are essential in our world today.

Throughout this school year, we have made focused efforts in all schools to promote a sense of belonging, safety and purpose in our work. While we have many successes to celebrate, we also continue to face very real challenges in our schools. Our children need our help. We have been partnering with many community agencies to address the needs of our students and create safer learning environments throughout the school year.

On Feb. 15, 2023, we held a meeting with key leaders and agencies. The purpose of the Community Leadership Collaborative is to bring together decision-makers in our community who can help to identify effective solutions that will meet the needs of our students and community. From the school's perspective, the needs are more intensive and complex than observed previously. We are particularly concerned about emotional dysregulation; physical and verbal aggression/conflict; substance use; and excessive absences and skipping. There was clear recognition by all meeting participants

that what we are experiencing in our schools is a function of the challenges across our greater community.

Please see the FCSD website for more information about the Community Leadership Collaborative. The next meeting will be scheduled in March. We invite all members of our community to share their ideas for solutions to these very complex problems. Please feel free to call 315-593-5511, email us at [clerk@fulton.cnyric.org](mailto:clerk@fulton.cnyric.org), or use the Let's Talk button on the main page of the FCSD website ([fultoncsd.org/letstalk](http://fultoncsd.org/letstalk)). We also plan to schedule additional opportunities for members of our school community to meet, share concerns and suggest potential solutions.

As you are aware, the Fulton City School District has convened an advisory committee to explore new logos and branding for our school district. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee met Jan. 23 and Feb. 13. Updates can be found on the FCSD website ([fultoncsd.org/logocommittee](http://fultoncsd.org/logocommittee)). We have an exciting opportunity to collectively create an enduring and unconditionally positive identity for our school district that promotes a sense of belonging, safety and purpose for all. Please be on the lookout for a variety of ways to provide input and feedback in the coming weeks and months.

I am confident that, collectively, we have the determination and expertise to improve the school experience for every student and promote their success so that our greater community can flourish. Each time we come together to address challenges we move closer to realizing the vision we have for our district. I look forward to working with you to make that vision a reality. Wishing you and your families a wonderful second semester of the school year!

Respectfully,

Brian T. Pulvino  
Superintendent of Schools

**Nondiscrimination notice:** It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status or disability in its educational programs, activities or employment, in accordance with Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitative Act of 1973. Any person who believes their rights have been violated should contact the district's Title IX Coordinator, Marc Copani, at 315.593.5538.