

# GOOD NEWS



## SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### STEM at Blodgett Girls Basketball Team Celebrates Undefeated Season

**“We’re here because we’re CHAMPIONS!”** A classroom full of students, parents, and staff erupted into cheers.

This year, to participate in sports, **Syracuse STEM at Blodgett** Middle School students must be gold card members. That means meeting certain attendance, behavior, and academic standards.

It also means students have been taking accountability for their actions and are showing true commitment to their chosen sport.

And – for the girls basketball team – it led to an impressive undefeated season!

“So many students are feeling empowered because of it,” Principal **Harry Valentin** shared of the shift in school culture. “These girls have inspired the whole school. Now they can be undefeated in anything because they have the discipline and the



confidence to do it. This was not only a season of basketball – these students have learned how to be strong for life.”

Following the undefeated season, Dr. Valentin and his administrative team hosted a celebration for the girls basketball team, their coaches, and their families. In a classroom one afternoon, families sat at tables adorned with balloons to watch a video montage of the season. The students, coaches, and athletes each had opportunities to share their memories; and they celebrated the growth of the student athletes over the course of the season.

Many of the girls on the team were new to the sport this year, making their incredible growth even more admirable. Coaches **Darre Evans** and **Tyrell Crenshaw** were joined by Syracuse University Assistant Women’s Basketball Coach **Sue Ludwig** to lead the team.

“You listened to our feedback, kept trying, and did your best,” Coach Crenshaw shared. “It’s about building character and learning life lessons on and off the court, and you did that.”



### SCSD to Celebrate the Graduating Class of 2025



We are so proud of the Syracuse City School District graduating Class of 2025! We will be celebrating their commencement at ceremonies at Onondaga Community College’s SRC Arena this June. For those interested in supporting the graduates, the ceremonies will be live-streamed on the SCSD Facebook page [facebook.com/SyracuseCitySchools](https://facebook.com/SyracuseCitySchools) at the following days and times.

**Thursday, June 26** – 6:00 pm – Corcoran • **Friday, June 27** – 6:00 pm – Henninger  
**Saturday, June 28** – 9:30 am – Nottingham • 1 pm – ITC • 4:00 pm – PSIA at Fowler

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[syracusecityschools.com](https://syracusecityschools.com)

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

The SCSD community continues to achieve greatness – students, staff, and alumni!

In this newsletter, you'll hear how a Corcoran graduate – now NASA astronaut – inspired SCSD students through a special question and answer session. You'll see how our talented Fine Arts students are entertaining the community through their spring musical productions and All-City performances. And, of course, you'll read countless stories of how our students' hard work is paving the way to their success.

Meanwhile, our Nottingham Mock Trial team won the County championship for the third time in four years; Montessori at LeMoyne students are creating change on the school's first-ever Student Council; Meachem students are learning healthy habits through a partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension; and Roberts students are using their voices to call for new ways for their classmates to learn about history. We are so proud of the wonderful things happening across the district.

The end of the school year will be here before we know it. That means it's more important than ever to ensure that your child stays in a daily school routine! To help lead your child to success, it's important for them to be in school, on time, every day. If there are factors preventing that from happening, please reach out to us at [syracusecityschools.com/LetsTalk](http://syracusecityschools.com/LetsTalk) and our Student Support Services and Attendance teams will do their best to assist. We are all in this together!

Sincerely,



Tony



## IMPORTANT DATES

### MAY 2025

23 Elementary and Middle School Interim Report Card Distribution

26 **Memorial Day (No School)**

### JUNE 2025

10-11 Regents

6-9 Science (Written) Grade 8 Make-up Dates

16 High School Marking Period 4 Ends

17-26 Regents Exams

19 **Juneteenth (No School)**

24 Elementary and Middle School Report Card Distribution

25 High School Report Card Distribution

26 **Last Day of School (Half Day)**

26 Elementary and Middle School Marking Period 4 Ends

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# SCSD Spotlights

## We're Proud to Support #SCSDArts!

From elementary schools to Pre-K-8 schools, middle and high schools, SCSD students are offered the opportunity to share their musical, acting, and behind the scenes talents in spring performances. This season, **Corcoran** students presented **Anastasia**; **Henninger** students performed **Hadestown** (Teen Edition); **Nottingham** students performed **Sweet Charity**; and **PSLA at Fowler** students performed **Cinderella**.

**Ed Smith** performed **Into the Woods, Jr.**; **Salem Hyde** performed **Beauty and the Beast, Jr.**; **Syracuse Latin** performed **Annie, Jr.**; **HW Smith** performed **Seussical, Jr.**; **Roberts** performed **The Big Bad Musical**; and **Clary** and **ELMS** came together to perform **Peter Pan, Jr.** We are so proud of the students and staff who worked hard to make these shows a success!

To see more photos from this year's musicals, please visit [flickr.com/photos/scsd/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/scsd/)







## SCSD All-City Chorus Performs Annual Concert

We're proud to celebrate the musical talents of our students. Each year, the spring All-City Chorus brings together three ensembles: elementary school, middle school, and high school – with each group of students performing vocal music. Thank you to **Jesstina Drake (HW Smith)** for hosting a well-run festival; as well as ensemble managers **Theresa Paul (Corcoran)**, **Mary Juman (Ed Smith)**, and **Andrea Ashline (Webster)**. The SCSD is full of outstanding talent!

## SCSD Swimmers Named Academic All-Americans



**Henninger** High School senior **Abigail Delaney**, **Henninger** senior **Taylor Sampson**, and **Nottingham** High School senior **Abigail Mannion** all recently received Academic All-American honors for their swimming and diving participation. We're so proud of their success!

## Astronaut – and Corcoran High School Alumna – Inspires SCSD Students



NASA astronaut (and Corcoran High School graduate) Jeanette Epps recently returned to her alma mater to inspire current SCSD students and motivate them to follow their dreams. Dr. Epps has made headlines for her groundbreaking contributions to space

exploration, and she shared her journey with **Corcoran** and **Roberts** students in an effort to inspire the next generation of scientific thinkers and innovators.

Students were invited to engage with Dr. Epps during a question and answer session, where they asked about her career, the field of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and the importance of education in reaching their dreams.



## Celebrating Our Differences at SCSD Special Olympiad Games

We were thrilled to again host a Special Olympiad event this spring – welcoming students in grades four and up to compete in accessible challenges. Students enjoyed face painting before they marched in the opening parade; and then they competed in events including a 25 M and 50 M dash, ball throw, long jump, sensory car wash, wheelchair course, bowling, cornhole, soccer, and more.

Thank you to our **Special Education Department** for their efforts planning the event, to Syracuse Parks & Recreation for their support, and to all the smiling students who let their spirits shine!

## SCSD Celebrates Volunteers at Annual Luncheon

Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh, SCSD Superintendent Davis, and SCSD building principals recently came together to celebrate volunteers at its annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon at Le Moyne College. The event recognized individuals who contribute their time and talents to support our students and staff throughout the year, serving in various capacities, such as guest readers and event leaders. [#SCSDGivesThanks](#) to all of our wonderful volunteers – we are grateful for you!



## Nottingham Mock Trial Team Continues Impressive Winning Streak

The **Nottingham** High School Mock Trial Team recently defeated F-M to earn its THIRD County Championship in four years!



Please join us in congratulating the team: **Alex Minta**, **Tess Martin**, **Azmira Suljic**, **Ngan Nguyen**, **Amina Jeilani**, and **Ruby Gozan-Keck**; as well as advisors **Dick Heimerman**, **Ed Luban** and **Peggy Conan** – and **Mr. Don Little**! The team last competed at Regionals on May 3rd. We're so proud of their continued success.

# PK-8<sup>th</sup> Grade News

## Montessori at LeMoyne Students Serve on First Ever Student Council

Once a week after school, a dozen third through fifth graders at **Montessori at LeMoyne** gather in School Counselor **Chris Armbrust's** office.

Serving as both the Student Equity Team and the Student Council, this group of student leaders is new to the school – but already making a big impact.

One of their initial projects was to implement recycling bins for cans and bottles, which they are using as a fundraiser. They have organized the themes for the school's winter spirit week; and they are exploring the possibility of starting a school garden.

Several students are hoping to push an anti-bullying campaign.

"I want to make a difference in the school," 5th grader **Celeste Hills** shared. "I think a no bullying campaign would be helpful because there are a lot of bullies lately and we need them to know that it's not okay to make people feel bad. I hope we can make a difference not just in the school but in the district. It makes me feel good to be a leader. I know that I can voice the things that I think should be changed, and my voice will be heard."

At one meeting, students listed things they'd like their principal to consider – including potentially giving students the ability to vote to select the daily lunch offerings one day a month. They provided feedback on school lunches, noting the student meal survey on



the SCSD Food & Nutrition website and making it a goal to share the link with every student in the school so they can all voice their feedback. They shared their thoughts on a potential school uniform proposal; and they suggested a 'Tell Me Something Good' segment on the school announcements, where students could submit good news happening in their lives and use that to help uplift the entire school community.

Many on the Council agree that regardless of the

decision-based changes that might happen in their school building, they already feel they are making a positive impact on the school culture.

"We have to be really responsible and be role models in the school," 5th grader **Iris O'Donnell** said. "Many students feel uncomfortable speaking up to adults, so it's our job to show them that we're here for them, listen to them, and then speak up and help them."

## Roberts Students Advocate for Women's History Month Field Trip

Justice and Equality for All!

**Roberts** 8th grader **Destyne Rogala**

made a protest sign at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, and this is what it said.



Last year, in music class, Destyne asked her music teacher if he thought the school would support a field trip to celebrate Women's History Month. Her teacher took the question to the building principal. This winter, the teacher approached Destyne again – asking who she thinks would like to join her on a trip. She quickly named two good friends who are equally as passionate about women's history – and the rest of the spots were offered by a lottery system to 100 other interested 7th and 8th graders.

"I really care about women's history," Destyne shared. "I feel like we don't celebrate it effectively at school – why aren't we telling everyone about the contributions of women? It's very important to me to see all that, to see how far we've come."

Destyne noted that at the museum, students were able to learn about activists like Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others – while visiting stations that encouraged deeper learning. They

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



learned what the Declaration of Sentiments means in modern language; and that women have been involved in much more than they're given credit for.

Her friends insist that now more than ever, it's critical for students to understand the challenges that our society has overcome and the stories that have led to where we are today.

"Knowing how much women have done throughout history and how much they fought for what we have now was so great to see," 8th grader **Emma Sanford** agreed. "If you don't know the history, you're ignorant – and that means you're stuck... you can't make progress. As young girls now, we have to stand up to protect our rights into the future."

## Meachem Students Learn Healthy Habits and Life Skills through SNAP-Ed Program

"What are some of your favorite fruits?" Cornell Cooperative Extension Nutrition Educator Mallory Burnham asked.

**Morgan Wicks'** third graders raised their hands enthusiastically as they were chosen to share.

Students at **Meachem** and **Syracuse Latin** have been learning about nutrition – and taste testing fruits and vegetables – this year, thanks to a special program led by Cornell Cooperative Extension staff. Over the course of 6 weeks, students are guided through a curriculum that touched on Fiber at Breakfast (where they made a Breakfast Banana Split), Rethink Your Drink (where they tried an Un-beet-able Berry Smoothie), GSW Fast Food (where they sampled Fried Rice), Snacking on Fruit (where they created a Fruit Salad), and Snacking on Vegetables (where they enjoyed Kale Dip and Spicy White Bean Dip).

Every lesson, students are introduced to life skills like measuring, cutting, food safety,

hygiene, and more. After helping make the day's menu item, each student gets to sample the item – and then is given a recipe card to bring home so they can recreate the recipe with their family.

"I eat fruits everyday," third grader **Ny'Layzia Sutton** shared proudly. "I just love it. I even grow some fruits with my mom... we've grown strawberries, grapes, even apples! One day in class, we made fruit smoothies. I made it at home, and when my mom found out it was healthy, she asked me to make it for her, too. Now, it's become my morning routine! I mix bananas, cinnamon, yogurt, and pineapple – I even add some spinach!"



## Dr. King Students are Full STEAM Ahead Thanks to New Literacy Initiative

"I like getting new books because they make me smarter!" **Dr. King** third grader **Ibrahim Woledi** exclaimed, as he opened "I Want to Be An Engineer" and started reading.

Syracuse children from birth through until age 5 are eligible to receive a free book each month, thanks to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library – administered by the Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County.

This November, the United Way of Central New York launched a new pilot program at STEAM at Dr. King – called Full STEAM Ahead. That month and each month since, every kindergarten through third grader in the building has been gifted a book, tied to the themes of science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Free to families, this initiative was made possible thanks to a generous \$20,000 donation by leadership development organization Emergent, based here in Syracuse.

We are so appreciative of our friends at Emergent and the United Way for making this initiative possible for our STEAM at Dr. King students! United Way staff note that they are working to gain additional funding, with the hope of expanding the program next school year.

## Franklin Students Explore Careers and Ease Fears at Crouse Hospital-Land

Franklin Elementary School second grader **Siham Aden** needed her tonsils out. Her parents – two fellow students – drove her to the hospital. A security guard – another classmate – checked them in. An admissions nurse – yet another peer – provided her with an ID bracelet. A transport nurse – classmate number five – brought her to her room in a wheelchair.

With classmates playing a pretend role every step of the way, the experience was all part of the interactive

“Hospital-Land” experience.

“That was fun!” Siham exclaimed, after her fake hospital experience was over. “My favorite thing was when

everyone was taking care of me. It made the hospital seem not so scary.”

That’s the idea behind the Crouse Hospital program. In a building in North Syracuse, centers are set up for kids to learn about security processes, admission procedures, hospital rooms, hospital staff, xrays, operating rooms, nutrition, maintenance, and more.

“Our second-grade team decided to organize this trip to address a significant concern among our students: many do not have primary care doctors and often visit local hospitals for medical attention,” Franklin teacher **Katie Luhr** said. “By providing an opportunity for students to explore the hospital environment, we aim to alleviate some of the anxieties associated with hospital visits.

This experience also allowed our children to engage in role-playing – acting out various healthcare careers, and potentially inspiring them to pursue futures as doctors, nurses, or a host of other possibilities in the healthcare field.”



## Brighton Academy’s Wolfpack Gaming Club Creates New Social Outlet



“Gamers today, engineers tomorrow.”

The message appears on screens throughout the computer lab at **Brighton Academy** as students in the school’s new gaming club log on to the EliteGaming Live platform.

About 45 students in grades 6-8 meet for the Wolfpack Gaming Club through the school’s after school programming. First, they

complete an academic component – learning about game design, story development, and more. Then, they’re free to game – taking part in competitions where they can earn gear and gift cards through their attendance and participation.

“I’m a gamer – I’ve played video games my entire life,” Brighton Academy Dean of Students **Tamara Willis** explained of what led her to start the group in the middle school. “Our kids who don’t want to do sports or the arts... they still need avenues to be involved. This opens up a whole new world to them! It gives them a social outlet, a reason to come to school and participate – even exposure to new career paths.”

Thanks to support from Advanced Student Resource Systems (ASRS), the school received contributions to assist with purchasing the gaming systems and computers, as well as the curriculum and educational resources – and even gear like club hoodies.

“Coming to school is fun now because I get to do this,” 6th grader **Imavianna Balitz** said. “We’ve learned all about gaming – engineering,

game writing, game artistry, sound design, game programming, and more. It’s just a hobby for me, but it’s fun.”

Moving forward, Ms. Willis looks forward to growing the club from its current meeting space in a school computer lab to the building’s STEM Center. Next school year, the group hopes to meet in the school’s old planetarium, which will soon become a complete gaming space.



# High School News

## High School Girls Inspired by Women in Law Event

Nearly two dozen young women representing **Corcoran**, **Henninger**, **ITC**, **Nottingham**, and **PSLA at Fowler** recently headed to the Onondaga County Courthouse.

Hosted by the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York (WBASNY), the Central New York Women's Bar Association (CNYWBA), and the Fifth Judicial District Gender Fairness Committee, the girls – all interested in pursuing work in the legal field – were there to enjoy a Women in Law program. Designed to introduce girls to the field of law and educate them on the varied and vast careers available in the legal field, the opportunity invited girls to hear from panelists about their professions, their personal journeys, and their experiences in the legal field. Students heard from esteemed Justices of the Supreme Court, a Syracuse City Court Judge, the Commissioner of Jurors, the ADR Coordinator, a Deputy Chief Court Clerk, a Court Officer, a Law Librarian, a Court Reporter, a private practitioner, and an attorney with the Center for Justice Innovation.

ITC sophomore **Malia Adams** has wanted to be a lawyer since she saw the movie *Legally Blonde* for the first time in 6th grade. Now, Malia serves as

the President of the ITC sophomore class and is developing an interest in entering politics.

"The Women in Law event opened my eyes to the experience of working in the field of law," she explained. "It felt comfortable to be there in the court house. It really re-enforced that this is something I want to do."

Many of the panelists spoke of their journey to where they are now. At least two of the professionals are former SCSD students; and they, along with others, spoke words of encouragement to the young women.

Syracuse City Court Judge Staci Dennis-Taylor graduated from Corcoran in 2003. She said it was an honor to speak with the current SCSD students – even those who may not pursue work in the legal field.

PSLA sophomore **Isis Davis** is interested in becoming a lawyer, having been told by many that she's a strong advocate.

"Seeing people who have been working in the field for so long and hearing what they overcame really inspired me," she said. "It was really empowering to see a



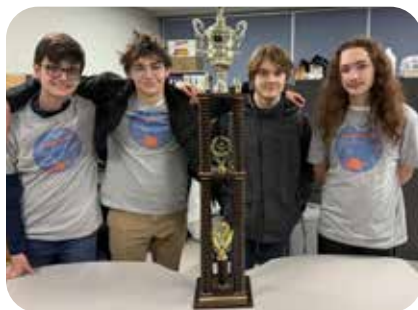
group of successful women – especially women of color. They told us to pursue our passions, no matter what – because as women, we can achieve anything!"

### Don't Miss More Good News!



Scan the QR code to visit our SCSD YouTube channel, where you'll find more good news - from CTE programs to Board of Education meetings and even to special events. You won't want to miss a recent video featuring Corcoran alumna and NASA Astronaut Jeanette Epps as she speaks with current Corcoran and Roberts students!

## ITC Students Place First in P-TECH Engineering Competition



We're so proud of all of our Pathways in Technology Early College High School students. P-TECH students from **Corcoran** and **ITC** recently participated in the 2025 Engineering Wars competition at Citi BOCES, where they were challenged to take a remote-controlled drone and convert it into a Hover craft. Students designed a method to force underneath to cause

the craft to hover; and then used the remote to fly the craft through a course.

One of our ITC teams placed first, completing the course in the shortest amount of time. Congratulations to ITC students **Amel Rizvic**, **Alex Kelly**, **Braiden Smith**, and **Thompson Jenkins**!





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## MISSION

To build, support and sustain school communities that provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

## VISION

To prepare and inspire all of our students to innovate locally and contribute globally.

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## NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Syracuse City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it is committed to providing equal access to all categories of employment, programs and educational opportunities, including career and technical education opportunities, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, Native American ancestry/ethnicity, creed or religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity or expression, disability or any other legally protected category under federal, state or local law.

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>> Share your questions, comments or concerns 24/7 using the Let's Talk tool at [www.syracusecityschools.com](http://www.syracusecityschools.com)



## SAY YES SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT:

Brian Huynh

Henninger High School  
Graduate, Class of 2022

### What college are you going to & what is your major(s)/minor(s)?

I am currently a junior at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, expecting to graduate in the spring of 2026! I originally came to Brown thinking that I wanted to major in Biomedical Engineering on the pre-med track but now, I am majoring in applied mathematics and economics.

### What are your goals after college (career, future plans, etc.)?

Right now, I think that I want to work full-time in finance in a major city after graduating, but I'm open to graduate school later down the road! My end goal is to work a job that allows me to continue learning after college, travel the world and meet new people. Far later in life, I am considering working in philanthropy.

### How did you learn about Say Yes to Education Syracuse?

I knew about Say Yes to Education Syracuse (Say Yes) while I was a Syracuse City School District student growing up! It was an opportunity that I was always encouraged to take advantage of by teachers, but it was the Upward Bound staff at Le Moyne College that truly taught me about the benefits of Say Yes.

### What does Say Yes mean to you?

Say Yes has been an important part of my college experience so far! It has opened doors for me that no one else in my family has accessed before. I am grateful for Say Yes and all that it does for our community. To me, Say Yes means redefining limits and pushing students to strive for excellence.



### Important Say Yes Reminders for Seniors:

1. Say Yes Syracuse Application Deadline: **July 1 2025**
2. FAFSA Application Deadline: **August 1 2025**
3. Text SAYYES to 1-315-562-7154 to receive announcements, reminders and Say Yes newsletters.

Learn more and sign up for the Say Yes newsletter at [SayYesSyracuse.org](http://SayYesSyracuse.org)