

# GOOD NEWS



SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



## First SCSD Girls Wrestling Team Breaks Barriers

It's one of the fastest growing sports in America – and now SCSD girls have the chance to take part.

The SCSD Girls Wrestling team – which kicked off in October – began with the athletes practicing in sock feet. But they were a team, and they were happy to be pioneering the team together.

Thanks to generosity from the community, donations soon came pouring in – enabling the team to purchase wrestling shoes. And in the blink of an eye, the team was competition ready.

For many of the 13 girls on the team, it was the appeal of having somewhere to release their frustrations that drew them to the sport.

“Wrestling has changed my life,” **Corcoran** junior **Me'Shaya Ross** reflected. “It's changed my grades,

it's changed how I take my anger out. Wrestling has taught me that I don't have to be angry at everybody... I can take it out on the mat.”

Me'Shaya hopes to continue wrestling in college, and then plans to become a lawyer – noting that the skills and self-control she's learned through wrestling will help her professionally as well.

“I like to fight,” **Henninger** sophomore **Treasure Pringle** agreed. “Wrestling has given me the self-control to walk away. It's all because of my team. We support each other, and they listen.”

For some athletes on this year's team, wrestling has also given them a glimpse into their future. **ITC** senior **Briella Corless** will be joining the Marines – noting that she joined the team because some Marine recruiters said they had personally benefitted from wrestling.

“It really suits me,” **Briella** said. “I'm an aggressive person and this allows me to direct a lot of my energy into the sport. Being part of the team has really made me appreciate both winning and losing more than I did before. I'm an emotional person, but having a team has been so nice. They're there to support me whether I win or lose... it's a second family. I expect that dynamic is a lot like the Marines will be.”

**Coach Niver** said she hopes to bring the team to their first travel competition this May in Virginia Beach – and then hopes to travel as an off-season team once the school year concludes. Moving forward, she has her sights set on keeping the girls she has now (minus this year's two seniors) and double the team's size next year. We can't wait to see what great things the girls wrestling team will accomplish in the seasons to come!

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**STAY INVOLVED**



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

I'm so proud of the ways our school communities are working toward our Strategic Plan priorities – finding ways to establish a culture of learning and high expectations, increasing student proficiency in literacy and numeracy, improving the sense of belonging for all members of our community, and more.

In this newsletter, you'll be able to read about some of the creative and engaging things our school staff are doing in line with this work. At Clary, students meet various academic and behavioral expectations to gain access to a fun new Community Room. At PSLA at Fowler, students have restarted the school's Student Council and even oversaw their own (positivity focused) election process. And at four middle schools, a new girls group is bringing women from the community in to mentor our young women and support them in reaching their goals.

Of course, our athletic and fine arts offerings continue to offer students an outlet for their skills and talents; and a variety of family engagement events have made it easier for families to engage both within our schools and with their children's learning. The SCSD is a wonderful community and we are happy that you're part of it. As always, please feel free to share your thoughts and feedback with us by visiting [syracusecityschools.com/LetsTalk!](http://syracusecityschools.com/LetsTalk!)

Sincerely,



## IMPORTANT DATES

### March 2025

- 20 First Day of Spring
- 24 BOE Work Session
- 25 BOE Policy Committee Meeting

**31 Staff Holiday/No School for Students**

### April 2025

- 2 Elementary & Middle School Marking Period 3 Ends
- 2 High School Marking Period 3 Ends
- 7 Spring Modified Athletics Begin
- 7-May CBT (3-8 ELA/Math, 5 & 8 Science)
- 16 BOE Meeting
- 11 High School Report Card Distribution
- 11 BOE Audit Committee

### 14-18 Spring Break

- 14 Elementary & Middle School Report Card Distribution

**18 Staff Holiday/No School for Students**

- 21 BOE Work Session
- 22 Superintendent's Parent Council Meeting
- 22 BOE Policy Committee Meeting
- 28 BOE Work Session
- 28- Grades 3 & 7 ELA/Math May 1 Testing (Paper)

## Tune In and Stay Connected!

Have you ever wondered what our high school students are learning about, or what Career and Technical Education looks like in the classroom? Would you be interested in seeing our students celebrating their athletic wins, hearing staff talk about why they chose SCSD, or catching a Video Chat that you may have missed?

Find all this and more on our **SCSD YouTube** channel. Content is updated regularly... please check back often!

[www.youtube.com/](http://www.youtube.com/)

[@syracusecityschoolsdistrict9487](https://www.youtube.com/@syracusecityschoolsdistrict9487)





# Student & Staff Spotlights



## SCSD Musicians Show Their Talent in All-City Performances

It's always a pleasure to see our talented student musicians come together to show their talents. This winter, elementary, middle, and high school bands performed in the All-City Band concert. Led by an area conductor, the All-City band is a SCSD tradition dating back at least five decades! The All-City Orchestra – our newest All-City event – was also a hit. SCSD music teachers **Jack Jones**, **Leigh Parry Benedict**, **Peter Smith**, and **Frederick Willard** hired three educators from outside the SCSD to come in to give our students a new perspective on playing their instruments. Students from grades 5-12 in most SCSD buildings came together for a culminating orchestra concert this February.



## Students Enhance Math Skills through 'Numbers in the Neighborhood'

Pre-K through 5th grade students and their families recently boosted their math skills through play at the Everybody Counts: Numbers in the Neighborhood event.

At the WCNY TV studios, students entered 'Countropolis' – an Everybody Counts City where kids were invited to choose where to work, where to shop, and what to do with the money they earn. Students acted as city leaders, business managers, shoppers, voters, and architects to run the city – all while participating in valuable math learning. Thank you to all who attended!

## Huntington Kindergarten Students Show Their Learning

"Where's N?" **Huntington Pre-K-8 School** Kindergarten teacher **Elizabeth Stachowski** asked her class.

One student jumped up, putting on her hand-made "vest" - decorated with drawings of a necklace, a nail, a net, and more. In the school's second-annual Alphabet Parade, kindergarten students showed their ABC knowledge while parading through the halls, where they were cheered on by older students. We're so proud of their **#SCSDLearning!**



# PK - 8th Grade News

## Syracuse Latin Students Celebrate Local History with Above Ground Railroad Project

"I had heard of the Jerry Rescue, but I was surprised to find out that he was arrested. The whole situation of them seizing him and making him a slave was so unfair," 6th grader **A'shari Hill** explained. "This happened in our city... it's important that we learn about our own history."

**Syracuse Latin** Administrative Intern **Melicia Edwards** couldn't agree more. In fact, that's exactly why she brought the Above Ground Railroad project to the school!

"As an African American person, I feel like we do the same thing every year for Black History Month," Ms. Edwards shared. "We talk about the same notable people that we've been talking about since I was in school! We all know about Martin Luther King and the bus boycott – but there are so many events that happened right here in Syracuse that we don't talk about often... many that adults don't even know about. We want students to learn

more about their community; and it's a great way to bring community members in and share our learning with them as well."

Ms. Edwards provided school staff with a Syracuse Black History Timeline – featuring events, people, places, and groups. Each class was invited to select their own event to learn more about – and then the students were responsible for deciding how they wanted to present their learning to their classmates.

Second grade students learned about the role Syracuse played in the Underground Railroad – proudly noting that Harriet Tubman lived in Auburn, NY and that a church in downtown Syracuse became a hub for abolitionist efforts.

Fourth graders examined the Black Lives Matter movement, with some students talking about George Floyd and how his death propelled the movement forward.



"Community is so important – and in the Jerry Rescue, the public came together to support a cause they believed in," 6th grader **Ada Edelstein** shared. "People often consider themselves different based on race or social class or other factors. The Jerry Rescue reminds us that we can all come together in a unified way and be a community supporting each other."

We're proud of Syracuse Latin students for taking leadership of their learning!

## Seymour Kindness Chain Celebrates Positive Behaviors

Random Acts of Kindness Day was February 17th – but at **Seymour Dual Language Academy**, students and staff had been performing good deeds for months!

Thanks to a new kindness campaign taking place in the school this year, students and staff have been challenged every day to perform random acts of kindness – and to share when they see others doing the same. Each time students or staff see someone doing something kind, they write the good deed on a piece of paper and add it to the paper chain of kindness which has been quickly spreading through the school.

Students hope that by the end of the school year, the chain will snake its way through the entire building! Leading the effort are the school's Student Ambassadors – two students each

from grades 2-5, elected by their peers to help create positive change in the building.

Third grader **Jayda Morales** is in her second year as an ambassador, noting that the role has helped her gain confidence while allowing her to make a difference.

"I wanted to be an ambassador because I'm helpful and super kind," Jayda explained. "I want to help other students learn to be as kind as I am, and I want kids to learn to speak up for themselves. It feels good to show people how to do the right things, and the kindness chain is one way we can do that."

"I'm shy and don't talk much, but I wanted to be an ambassador so people can see who I really am: a good leader who takes care of people," 5th grader



**Cornelius Thomas** shared. "If teachers need help cleaning or setting up chairs, if someone needs help with a math problem... I'm here to help. My goal as ambassador is to help people get along and learn to be more respectful and that's what we are doing with the kindness chain."

We're proud of the entire Seymour community for focusing on the positive and spreading a trail of positivity throughout their building!



## Middle School Girls Mentoring Groups Build Confidence

“It’s made me more open to my feelings.”

A group of 6th to 8th graders stretch their arms high above their heads in the **Brighton Academy** auditorium, led by a visiting yoga instructor and mentor.

Through a new girl’s group – offered this year at **Brighton Academy, Clary, Lincoln, and Syracuse STEM at Blodgett** – mentors from the community visit the middle school girls in their respective schools twice a month. There, they focus on monthly themes like mind and body connection – talking with the girls about financial literacy and budgeting, their intentions for the year, how they feel, and more.

“I wanted to join this girls group because I wanted the opportunity to feel calm and have time to myself,” 8th grader **Aisis Frasier** said. “My favorite thing about coming here is that there are no off vibes – everyone is cool here and nothing has been boring.”

That was Syracuse Common Councilor

At-Large **Rasheada Caldwell**’s goal when she proposed the girls groups earlier this year.

“In many of my roles, I’m involved with making decisions that impact children,” Ms. Caldwell shared. “But when you’re not involved directly with children, it’s hard to make the best decisions for them. So often, people don’t pay attention to our young ladies... but they all want to express themselves and be heard. Our objective is to teach them how amazing they are.”

At Clary Middle School, a group of girls stands in a circle with their mentors. One at a time, they say an affirmation – which is then repeated in unison by the rest of the group.

“Even though I’m young and they look down on me, when I get older, they’re gonna have to look up!” one girl shouts. Through their meetings, the girls note they have learned about how to focus on loving yourself, giving back, doing good, being kind, and showing respect. Each meeting, the mentors and girls come



together to express themselves through painting, group discussions, journaling, team building games, and more.

“I’m not good at communicating,” Clary 8th grader **Jaliana Robinson** explained. “This has been a good opportunity for me to get out of my comfort zone and talk to people. It’s made me more open to my feelings and has opened me up to more ways that I can communicate how I feel. Being with other girls, we have a lot in common.”

Thank you to Ms. Caldwell and her group of committed mentors for taking the time to lift up and support our young women!

## Clary Community Room Provides Students Room to Grow – and Game

The 6th grade lunch period started, and a group of students entered the **Clary Middle School** Community Room with excitement.

Some sunk into the leather couches; some gathered at high-top tables to eat their lunch. Others engaged in friendly games of ping pong or basketball; remaining classmates beelined for the treadmills and weight machines.

“It’s very fun here,” 6th grader **Ichariah Franklin** shared. “I like that we can come here, use our phones, and sit around and chill. It helps me relax... I look forward to coming in here in the middle of the day.”

It all started with the district’s Participatory Budgeting activity several years ago. Then, the school voted, choosing to use \$5,000 to order arcade games, a ping pong table, and some other items to start a Community Center. Initially housed in the back of the school cafeteria as a behavior incentive, over time, the Center has expanded – now filling a large space

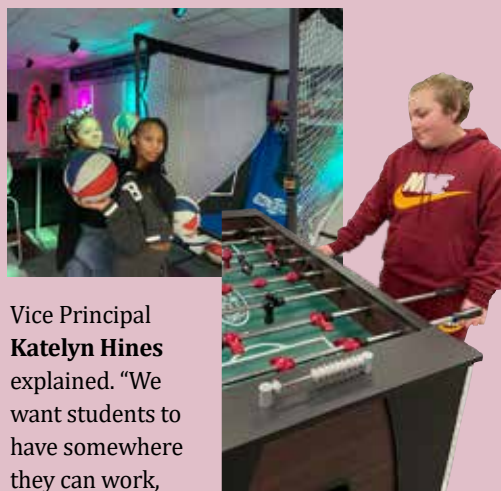
off of the school’s foyer.

Elite Gaming provided gaming consoles like Playstation, Nintendo Switch, and Xbox and has added gaming themed wraps to the room’s walls. The school has repainted the space and replaced the floors. They’ve added couches; and thanks to Physical Education budget funding, have added a variety of fitness equipment. In the fall, students were trained on how to use it.

“I really like the gym,” 6th grader **Isaiah Stewart** said. “I like to work out, and I’m trying to bulk up this year. Coming in here helps me get my energy out so when I go back to class, I’m ready to work.”

Students earn entry through the school’s MYP card incentive: they can visit during lunch on Fridays if they have a gold card; during lunch all week long as platinum card holders; and as a black card holder, students can visit the room during lunch or class periods, with teacher permission.

“Our vision is like a Google workspace,”



Vice Principal **Katelyn Hines** explained. “We want students to have somewhere they can work, then take a break to have a snack or play a game with a coworker, then go back to work.”

School staff hope to soon add more gaming chairs and other miscellaneous perks – like snacks and drinks; and in the years to come, Clary administrators hope to create a plan that would allow them to staff the room into the evening hours, when it could be opened to southside families.

## STEM at Blodgett Cheerleading Team Boosts School Pride



The shouts in the **Syracuse STEM at Blodgett** cafeteria can be heard from down the hall.

“When we say lions,  
you say roar!”

The energy is palpable, and the pom poms are waving. The school's cheerleading team is practicing their cheers – which they'll perform at the upcoming boys basketball game.

Thanks to support from the SCSD Athletics Department, all middle schools were offered the opportunity to launch a cheerleading team this school year.

“It's really fun to be on a team,” 7th grader **Anisa Abramson** shared. “It's been great to help me learn to talk to different people and meet more people. It's also a great opportunity for girls to have more options after school, besides volleyball and basketball.”

“The cheerleading team motivates me to get my work done so I can get to practice,” Co-Captain **Elvianis Pinet** agreed. “Being part of the team has also helped me turn myself around in school – I want to be better now... being part of the team makes me want to stay out of the halls.”

Way go to, cheer team... we love seeing you help boost your school's **#SCSDSpirit!**

# High School News



## PSLA Student Council Aims to Amplify Student Voices

“Are there any orders of business?” **ENL** teacher and Student Council Advisor **Rosanna Higgins-Schild** asked.

“Let's pull up the candidate list to confirm who's running for what,” junior **Seth Charles** responded.

A group of a couple dozen **PSLA at Fowler** students went on to discuss 30 second campaign videos and how to best share them with the school community, how students would vote, and about possibly having their newly elected officers speak at an upcoming schoolwide pep rally.

In the school's newly re-formed Student Council, the students worked hard to respect the election process. All members interested in running for class office signed a Student Council Election Code of Conduct, agreeing to campaign in a positive, considerate way without tearing down other candidates.

“They're redefining citizenship,” Ms. Higgins-Schild stated proudly.

“Before the Student Council started up, there was never an opportunity for change, or for students to have a voice,” senior **Jaden Hanniford** shared. In this winter's election, Jaden ran for Student Council Vice President – and won. “We hope to hold a fundraiser to support the senior class and the rising senior class. The senior dues have gotten so expensive... we'd love to be able to do something to help. I'm serving as Vice President because I feel like it gives me a chance to be in a leadership role and work hand in hand with the president to make decisions. I believe that if we suggest things in a way where the administration can understand how it would benefit everyone, they'll listen to us. We come to school every day to learn, but also to grow in skills that will help us later in life. The student council will help us with that!”

Seth, who was elected Student Council President, is the one who led the charge for Student Council to start up this year, after a few years' hiatus.

“We needed a group where students can share their opinions and then change can actually happen,” he said. “Ultimately, my hope for Student Council is that we can help students feel heard – especially the incoming freshmen. Student Council is essential in helping our administrators understand how we think as youth. This can help them make decisions that will ultimately impact future generations in our building, too. I'd love for us to be able to lead more fundraising so we can create more clubs and activities, add more mental health supports and awareness, and incorporate more cultural diversity. I know this group will be successful... I've had so many people asking me how they can get involved. Ultimately, it's helping students become more invested in our school!”

We're so proud of the Student Council members who are **#LeadingSCSD** and look forward to hearing about the positive changes they will bring about in their building!



# SCSD Celebrates at BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT!

It was wonderful to see such a great turn out at the SCSD Office of Family Engagement's vibrant celebration of Black Excellence!

Families enjoyed captivating performances by SCSD students in dance, song, and spoken word; along with a dynamic STEP performance from Syracuse University's Divine 9 Fraternities and Sororities. Attendees were invited to savor delicious food, play fun games, and show off their dance skills.

We hope to see you at an upcoming Family Engagement event! To learn more, visit our online calendar at [syracusecityschools.com/calendar](https://syracusecityschools.com/calendar) or [syracusecityschools.com/OFE](https://syracusecityschools.com/OFE).



## Alumni Spotlight: Edgar J. Johnson



**SCSD Schools Attended:** Frazer, Blodgett, and Fowler ('82)

**College and Major(s):** Le Moyne College (BA, Industrial Relations) and University of Minnesota (MA, Industrial Relations)

**Career Path:** Currently, I work in Human Resources for SUNY Upstate Medical University as the Community Employment Lead (Workforce Recruitment). After high school, I joined the U.S. Army. My Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) was 71L-Administrative Specialist. I worked in Personnel Admin Centers managing enlisted and officer evaluation reports. I also worked in training where I managed training schedules for a battalion.

**The coolest thing about my job is...** As the Community Employment Lead for SUNY Upstate, I get to see the world

without leaving Syracuse. My job interacts with ALL communities that make up the city of Syracuse to include New Americans, Refugees and Immigrants. The coolest thing that happened to me is that I helped organized a career and job fair at my alma mater, Fowler High School. It gave me a sense of giving back by promoting careers and jobs at SUNY Upstate and interacting with the outstanding students at Fowler.

**The most valuable thing I learned in school is...** never give up. If you stumble and fall, get back up, dust yourself off and keep moving to become the best version of yourself.

**I'm proud to be a SCSD graduate because...** because I had the best teachers who had a profound impact on my life and career.

**One piece of advice I'd give to SCSD students is...** do not desert your community. Pay it forward because those who came before you paved a path for you to have more possibilities and opportunities.



### Calling All SCSD Alumni!

Did you graduate from the Syracuse City School District? We'd love to hear from you! Please email us at [goodnews@scsd.us](mailto:goodnews@scsd.us) with your name, graduation year (and high school), and your current job. We may follow up with you to potentially highlight you as a future Alumni Spotlight!



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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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## Say Yes Student Spotlight: Sierra Endreny

When Sierra graduated from Nottingham High School in 2016, she wasn't sure what major she would pursue in college, but she felt comforted and excited to begin her higher education journey with the help of a Say Yes Syracuse scholarship.

Throughout high school, Sierra was involved in multiple extracurricular activities. She was most active in DECA, a nonprofit organization and club that helps high school students establish a career and build skills in business management. Sierra also participated in her gospel choir and ran the 800 meters on the track and field team.

As she reflected on her past, she recalled seeing older students travel to Los Angeles and other cities to compete in entrepreneurship competitions, which motivated her to become more active in her school's entrepreneurship club so she could do the same. Sierra practiced and developed her financial skills with the help of one of her favorite school teachers. She later had the opportunity to travel to Rochester for a New York State business competition and to multiple other schools and areas across the region, just like her younger self had envisioned.

"For me, Say Yes was a tremendous safety net along my college journey that allowed me to experience opportunities I may not have otherwise had," she said. "To me, Say Yes means opportunity and access to education, something not everyone has."



## Important Say Yes Reminders for Seniors:

1. Say Yes Syracuse Application  
Deadline: **July 1 2025**
2. FAFSA Application  
Deadline: **August 1 2025.**

Text **SAYYES** to  
**1-315-562-7154**  
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