

December 2023



LOOK
at US!



From the Superintendent's Den

As I write this column, I am reminded of the holiday season and the spirit of giving where goodwill is prevalent and the ideas of giving, in all its meanings, are widely embraced as a core component of why we do what we do. Each and every day all of us at VCSD have a focus of giving of ourselves to our students and/or for the betterment of our school community. We also give to each other what we know, what we stand for, what we care about, and who we are as professionals. Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

I truly believe each and every one of us at VCSD have chosen to work in a school district to give a better education to our students. This comes in all capacities from inside the classrooms, on the school buses, in the offices, preparing meals, cleaning and maintaining our facilities, and through extracurricular activities. This life decision to give back to our students and school community is, in my opinion, a noble act.

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Staff District Art Show

VHS Art Department is curating an exhibit of art pieces by Vestal Staff Jan 16 - Feb 1

See page 4 for more details



Cover Photo - *The Caper of the Missing Words!*

District Literacy Specialist Sarah Evans, and her accomplice, Dylan Ruffo, welcomed hordes of exuberant first-graders from ARE, CAE, GLE, THE, and VHE to the District Office for their annual Word Detectives adventure during the last week of November. They are shown on November 28 with first-grade Word Detectives from Glenwood Elementary.

Holiday Offerings

This is the season for winter concerts and other fun activities. Here's what is scheduled across the District:

- VHS Concert Chorus & Vestal Voices / 7 p.m., December 19 (Vestal HS Auditorium)
- VMS Grades 7 & 8 Chorus Concert / 7 p.m., January 11, 2024 (African Road Auditorium)
- VHS Vestal Voices Dessert Cabaret / 7 p.m., January 18 (Vestal HS Cafeteria)
- Vestal Staff Art Show Opening Reception / 3:30 p.m. January 19 (VHS Art Gallery)
- VMS Grades 6 - 8 Band / 7 p.m., January 23 (African Road Auditorium)
- CAE Winter Concert / 7 p.m., January 24 (Clayton Avenue Auditorium)
- VHE Band & Chorus Winter Concert / 7 p.m., January 24 (Vestal Hills Elementary)
- ARE Chorus & Band / 7 p.m., January 25 (African Road Auditorium)
- VHE Talent Show / 6 p.m., January 26 (Vestal Hills Elementary)
- VMS Grade 6 Chorus / 7 p.m., February 1 (African Road Auditorium)
- Emerald Fire Winterguard Home Show 5 p.m., February 3 (Vestal HS Gym)
- GLE Band & Orchestra Concert / 7 p.m., February 5 (Glenwood Elementary)
- VHE Orchestra Concert / 7 p.m., February 6 (Vestal Hills Elementary)
- ARE/VMS Winter Orchestra Concert / 7 p.m., February 7 (African Road Auditorium)
- THE Band, Chorus & Orchestra Concert 7 p.m., February 8 (Tioga Hills Elementary)
- VHS Chamber Music & Cookies / 7 p.m., February 9 (Vestal HS Auditorium)
- ARE Valentine's Showcase / 2:30 p.m., February 14 (African Road Auditorium)
- VHS Musical - "High School Musical" 7 p.m., February 22, 23, & 24 1 p.m., February 25
- VHE Cultural Collage / 6 p.m., February 28 (Vestal Hills Elementary)

Reminder: When school is closed, after-school events are likewise canceled.

School Board Reminders

School Board Meeting

6 p.m., Tuesday, December 19, 2023
Administration Board Conference Room

School Board Meeting

6 p.m., Tuesday, January 9, 2024
Vestal High School

School Board Meeting

6 p.m., Tuesday, January 23, 2024
Administration Board Conference Room

From The Superintendent's Den (continued from cover)

You may know, my first degrees in college were not in the field of education, rather I focused on engineering/technology. However, upon realizing that I wanted to give back to others the way my K-12 teachers inspired me, I reached out to one of my favorite high school mathematics teachers. I asked her if I could shadow her for a day in her classroom as I was contemplating completing a degree in Secondary Education in Mathematics. She agreed. After the visit, I altered my college course of study. The rest, they say is history.... Until, last week when I received communication from my (now long retired) favorite high school mathematics teacher. She had heard of my new position as Superintendent of Vestal Schools. She mentioned how proud she was of me as her student, and then a teacher colleague (I taught for 13 years at my alma mater), an administrator, and now Superintendent. As I reflected on her comments, I realized what a gift she was to education. Not only did she inspire me to become a teacher, but I wonder how many other students' lives she touched positively during her career? She was, and is, a true blessing and a testament to the philosophy of *We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.*

Thank you for indulging me by reading this reflection of giving. May all of you enjoy a wonderful winter break and a happy holiday season. We make a living each day by showing up to work, but we make a life by giving of ourselves freely while we are here. Thank you for making a difference at our school district through your passion for giving each and every day!

Information & Reminders from Personnel

OMNI for Retirees

If you are retiring, will be returning as a substitute, and currently participate in an OMNI 403b deduction, your OMNI account will need attention upon your retirement. You may continue your 403b deduction, OR you may stop your 403b deduction.

In order to stop your deduction, you will need to complete a Salary Reduction Agreement, listing your service provider in Part 3 with a contribution amount of \$0.00. This can be done online at www.omni403b.com, or you may obtain a paper form from the Personnel Office.

Again, this only affects retirees who plan to return as substitutes.

If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Wickham at Ext. 2228.



UPDATE - Website Staff Directory

The Staff Directory for the District website has been created and is in the review stage. We anticipate it going live by the beginning of next week.

Faculty, administrators, counselors, social workers, therapists, school nurses, psychologists, and main office typists will be included in this tool that will enable families and guardians to more easily contact them with questions.

New Golden Bear Faces



Michael Dingman is the new typist in the Vestal H.S. main office...
Welcome, Michael!



And say "Hello" to **Jed Frost**, our new Assistant Director of Facilities & Operations.

Vestal Staff Art Show

Calling all Artists and Creative People!.. The High School Art Department is hosting a Vestal Staff Art Show. The exhibit, to be displayed January 16 - February 1, 2024, will include artwork from all staff, including bus drivers, clerical, custodians, paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, and more. If you work here in Vestal, you ARE included!

Important dates and details: All work must be K - 12 appropriate. Drop off or send your work in by or on January 5, 2024, to the VHS Art Department, care of Melissa Restuccia or Mallory Little.

Opening Reception: 3:30 - 5:30 p.m., January 19, 2024, High School Art Gallery.



Staff Photos



Leading by example... Tioga Hills Principal Hayley Crimmins models kindness and generosity for her students with annual giving traditions. Here she helps fifth-graders pack up food collected during the school's Holiday Food Drive. It is given to Apalachin Lions Club, which helps supply food pantries.



Glenwood Word Detectives... Behind every successful First-Grade Word Detective is a great teacher! Gretchen Blachowiak, Glenwood Elementary, helps a student figure out a word clue.



Pajama Day at VMS... Middle School English teachers Kate Stowell, Stephanie Mills, Jennifer Gerardi, and Kate's student teacher from Binghamton University, Grace Morton, wore their PJs and helped students raise money for Children's Hospital of Philadelphia by collecting donations on Pajama Day, December 8. The school raised over \$879!

Photo courtesy of Kate Stowell