

SEPTEMBER 2023

LOOK at US!

Vestal School Board announces selection of Clifford Kasson as next Vestal Superintendent

In June, the Vestal Board of Education offered the position of Superintendent of Vestal Schools to Clifford Kasson. This decision was reached after interviews with three finalist candidates on June 12, followed by written feedback provided by seven stakeholder groups and a virtual town hall open to community members. A Thought Exchange conducted after the town hall elicited 225 comments and 7,545 ratings. The School Board reviewed all feedback before offering the position to Mr. Kasson.

Contract negotiations between the School Board and Mr. Kasson commenced over the summer. Upon their conclusion, the Board appointed Mr. Kasson to be the next Superintendent, effective October 28, 2023.

Before we congratulate Deputy Superintendent Kasson on his promotion to Superintendent, we want to thank retiring Superintendent Jeffrey Ahearn for his 11 years of superlative service to Vestal Central Schools! We wish you all the best in your retirement.

Congratulations to Clifford Kasson! We know your unbounded enthusiasm for all things “Vestal” will help you lead us to even greater successes.

StacheStrong 5K
3 p.m, September 16
Vestal High School



STACHE STRONG
SUPPORTING BRAIN CANCER RESEARCH

The 6th Annual StacheStrong 5K is coming up. Please consider joining the Willda Beast team, in memory of Will Worsnopp, VMS Teacher, who lost his battle with glioblastoma in August 2021.

Donate or Participate:



Published for the staff of the Vestal Central School District



Cover Photo - *Beginnings 6 Summer Enrichment*

Over 100 incoming sixth-graders enjoyed a week of team-building, creative expression, and hands-on activities in August to become acclimated with their new school. The summer program also increased social-emotional learning, helped reduce feelings of stress and anxiety over the pending transition, and provided the students with attention and focus strategies. Finally, it fostered positive relationships between students and established a sense of belonging among the future middle-schoolers.

In the photo, VMS Social Worker Amy Bennett helps a student with the rubber gloves he will wear while participating in a team-building relay race.

Welcoming New Staff

Special Education Director

A big Golden Bear hug to new Director of Special Education Katherine Mazourek!

Mrs. Mazourek joins us from Unatego Central School District where she served as Director of Special Programs. She has a rich instructional background, bringing to Vestal over 29 years of experience in education. She began her career as a General Music Teacher and Music Therapist for Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES in Ithaca, New York, teaching students with multiple disabilities. She also served as vocal and general music teacher in Newfield and Richfield Springs school districts, respectively, before heading south to teach Music in Arkansas. Other appointments include Assistant Principal for elementary schools in North Carolina and Arkansas,

as well as an elementary principal in Arkansas. She returned to New York State in 2014 where she was Principal of Unatego Elementary School.

Mrs. Mazourek earned her Bachelor's of Music in Education from Mansfield University, her MS in Education from Elmira College, and her MS in School Administration from Gardner-Webb University (NC). Her administrative certification came from SUNY Oswego.

Katherine and her husband have a son, who is a junior in a neighboring school district this year. Her love of music continues as she enjoys taking in all of his musical activities, as well as cheering on the sidelines of his soccer games and tennis matches.



Assistant Director of Special Education

Rounding out our administrative team in the Special Education Department is Angelia Eggleston, who began as the Assistant Director of Special Education on August 23, 2023.

Mrs. Eggleston worked as a special educator at Broome-Tioga BOCES for seven years before serving as Committee for Special Education Chair in the Cortland Enlarged School District.

School Board Reminders

6 p.m., Tuesday, September 12, 2023

6 p.m., Tuesday, September 26, 2023

6 p.m., Tuesday, October 10, 2023

6 p.m., Tuesday, October 24, 2023

Board of Education Conference Room
Administration Building

Assistant Director of Special Education continued from page 2

A native of Binghamton, she graduated from Binghamton High School and then earned her degrees from SUNY Cortland. During her early days, post-college, she enjoyed subbing and coaching in many local districts around the Greater Binghamton area.

Angelia lives in Johnson City with her husband, one-year-old son, and their dog, Sonny.

Administrator of Managed Technology Services

Jenn Weston assumed her new role as Administrator for Vestal's Managed Technology Services with Broome-Tioga BOCES on July 31. She joins us from the Binghamton City School District where she was, most recently, a second-grade teacher.

Jenn received her BS in Childhood Education from SUNY Cortland and her Master's in Special Education from Binghamton University. She then returned to SUNY Cortland to earn her CAS in Educational Leadership.

Jenn spent her teaching career as a second-grade teacher at Woodrow Wilson Elementary, part of Binghamton CSD. During her time in the district, she coached lacrosse, was an active member of the building's shared leadership team, and facilitated professional development for CLR practices.

During the last eight years in the classroom, Jenn has grown a passion for instructional technology. She is eager to begin working with Vestal Staff this school year to enhance opportunities for our students and staff.

Jenn lives in Johnson City, NY, with her husband, Phil, and daughter, Finley.



New Teachers for 2023- 24



Welcome to our 2023-24 new teachers! **(Front row)** Jennifer Gerardi, Grace McLaughlin, Christopher Dattoria, Mary Clark, Marissa Gribbin, Sara Dewey, Christina Shin, Jessica Juozitis, Shelby Monell **(Back row)** Danielle Purdy, Shannon Hicks, Kimberly Bradley, Victoria Rose, Rachel Burns, Megan Nestor, Emily Kuhn, Nathan MacLean **(Not Present)** Daiamy Krizanek and Agnes Wasielewski

Health Insurance *Open Enrollment*

The next open enrollment period for Health Insurance will begin on September 1 and end on September 30, 2023. You may enroll, change your coverage or change dependents at that time. If your dependent is under 26 years of age, he/she may be eligible to be covered by your insurance in accordance with Federal regulations.

You may also change your health insurance coverage any time during the year when there are changes in your status due to marriage, divorce, childbirth, spousal loss of employment, spousal death, or any change that falls under the IRS criteria for a significant event. (See www.mycafeteriaplan.com/account_rules_claim_filing.htm for more specifics.)

Please contact Stacy Wickham in Benefits at Ext. 2228 with questions or for an application.

VTA Dental Insurance

The month of September is the only month that VTA employees can add or remove dependents or change coverage, unless it is for a “legal” reason. **Please ensure that you have added all of your dependents on the plan by September 30, 2023**, or coverage will not be available until October 1, 2024.

If you need to add dependents to your policy, please complete the dental enrollment form located under Staff/District Forms on the Vestal CSD website.

Flexible Spending Account *Prepare for the New Plan Year*

The next plan year is October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. **Enrollment forms MUST be received in the Benefits Office by 4 p.m., Friday, September 29, 2023.** Enrollment information/forms are available in the main office of each building and on the website at www.vestal.k12.ny.us. Go to the “Staff” tab and “District Forms.”

Vestal will again offer the prepaid benefits (debit) card. This card will offer employees the flexibility to access their funds in their medical flexible spending account at the point of service such as the doctors’ office, dental office, and pharmacy. This will reduce the out-of-pocket money that employees have had to provide in the past. Please note that the debit card will not eliminate all paper claims and there will be situations where a debit card transaction needs to be substantiated with a claim form. The debit card simply provides an easier way to access the funds in the employee’s account. The debit card feature allows 24/7 access to employee account balances and claim history.

Please note, the Health Care Reform Bill also changed the definition of dependent as it relates to tax free health benefits. The new definition changes the meaning from a dependent who is considered your dependent for tax return purposes, to a meaning of your “child” (children, adopted children and eligible foster children) who will not yet turn age 27 during the year, regardless of whether the child otherwise qualifies as a tax dependent. The “child” for this purpose does not need to live with the parent, does not need to be a dependent on the parent’s tax return, or no longer be a student.

Reminder - If you currently have a Benny Card, please note the expiration date on the card. The card will be activated if you sign up again this year. There is a \$10 fee to replace active cards if destroyed before the expiration date.

You must enroll for medical and dependent care accounts each year. **Please plan carefully as any funds not used will be forfeited.** If you have questions please call Stacy Wickham in Benefits at Ext. 2228.

Personnel Information *continued*

Retirement Plan *OMNI 403b*

As an employee of the Vestal Central School District (VCSD), you have the opportunity to save for retirement by participating in a 403(b) plan with The OMNI Group. You can participate in the Plan with pre-tax contributions by completing a Salary Reduction Agreement (SRA) found online at www.omni403b.com. You may also submit the SRA to The OMNI Group either by fax to 585-672-6194 or by mail to 1099 Jay Street, Building F, Rochester, NY 14611.

You may contribute up to \$22,500 per calendar year, subject to change. If you are at least 50 years old, you may also be able to make additional catch-up contributions. If you have any questions, please contact Stacy in Benefits at Ext. 2228, or call The OMNI Group directly at 877-544-6664. Further information may also be found at www.omni403b.com/Employees.

Proof of Full-time Student Status required for Dependent Dental Insurance

To expedite your insurance claims for Dependents age 19 - 25 whom you have on your Sieba, Ltd. Dental Plan, **you will need to submit proof of your dependent's full-time student status for each semester that a student is enrolled.**

The Vestal CSD Dental Insurance only covers dependents after the age of 19 if they are full-time college students. Their dental coverage ends June 30 of each college school year, **or** at the end of the month in which they graduate from college.

Dependent coverage can continue up to age 25, as long as they remain full-time college students. You must submit a full-time Student Verification Form (found under Staff Forms on the district's Staff web page) to the Personnel Office with proof of full-time student status for each semester.

If you have not submitted proof that your dependent is enrolled in college full time and they incur a claim, the claim will be denied. You will have to submit the verification form with proof of full-time student status and then re-submit the dental claim.

Reminders:

Personnel Directory Slips

You should have received a Google form through your Vestal email account from Michelle Schaub on August 7, 2023, that will serve as your Personnel Directory slip this year. Please fill this out, even if you have no changes for this year, and submit it by September 22, 2023. For your convenience, here is the link to that form again: [2023-24 Personnel Directory Slip](#)

A quantity of hard copies have been sent to the buildings, so please see your main office secretary if you prefer to fill out a hard copy. Then, send it back via inter-office mail to Michelle Schaub in the Admin building.

Thank you!

Cancer Screening Leave

NYS Civil Service Law 159-b was amended entitling all District employees to take up to four hours of paid leave annually, without charge to any other accumulated leave, **for medical screening for any cancer.**

Travel time is included in the four-hour cap. Absence beyond the four hours must be charged to a Leave benefit day. The leave is not cumulative and expires at the close of business on the last day of each fiscal school year (July 1 - June 30). Find the Cancer Screening Leave form on the District Forms web page under Staff. It is also available from the Personnel Office. The form must be completed by your health care provider and returned to the Personnel Office in order for the leave to be paid.

Staff Photos from August 2023

Clockwise from right; Tioga Hills Kindergarten teacher Kelly Waterman helps welcome Kindergarten students at Orientation.

School Bus mechanics Matt Darrah, Fred Brand, Joel Baker and Mitchell Dabrovolskis, along with Senior Stores Clerk Tom Marcello (second from left), get the fleet ready for the new school year.

Vestal HS Teacher Aide Stacy Reece helps hand out Chromebooks to seniors on August 31, 2023.

Vestal MS Assistant Principal Ashley McKenna answers the question of an incoming sixth-grader during orientation on August 28.

The Transportation team also includes Connie VanSteenburg, Head Bus Driver; Director Ken Starr; Dale Frisbie, School Bus Route Coordinator; and Mallory Conrad, Clerical Substitute.



Challenge • Support • Foster • Invest

Vestal Central School District

ARE YOU AWARE OF YOUR 403(b) BENEFIT?

THE OPPORTUNITY

You have the opportunity to save for retirement by participating in your Employer's 403(b) retirement plan. A 403(b) plan is a retirement plan for certain employees of public schools, tax-exempt organizations and ministries.

We recommend that all employees visit our education page which can be found here:

<https://www.omni403b.com/Employees/Education>

WHY SAVE WITH 403(b)?

1. You do not pay income on allowable contributions until you begin making withdrawals from the plan, usually after your retirement.
2. Investment gains in the plan are not taxed until distribution.
3. Generally, retirement assets can be carried from one employer to another.

Future retirement savings value assuming 6% growth

Monthly Contributions	5 Year	15 Years	20 Years
\$50	\$3,489	\$14,541	\$23,102
\$200	\$13,954	\$58,164	\$92,408
\$500	\$34,885	\$145,409	\$231,020

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?

Prior to contributing you must open an account with an investment provider authorized in the Plan, a list of which is available on the right. You may then complete a Salary Reduction Agreement (SRA) online at:

<https://www.omni403b.com/SRA>

If you are already contributing to your Employer's Plan and you want to change your contribution amount or investment provider, simply complete and submit a new SRA. You can begin or change your contributions as soon as your next payment cycle following our receipt of a completed SRA.

HOW MUCH CAN I CONTRIBUTE ANNUALLY?

In 2023 you may contribute up to \$22,500 if you are 49 years of age or below and up to \$30,000 if you are 50 years of age and over. You may also be entitled to additional catch-up provisions like the 15 Year Service Catch-up. Please contact OMNI's Customer Care Center at **877.544.6664** for further details

Contribution Limits		15 Yr. Service Catch-up (if eligible)	Maximum Employer Contributions	Combined Limit	
Age 49 & below	Age 50 & above			Age 49 & below	Age 50 & above
\$22,500	\$30,000	\$3,000	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$73,500

LOOKING FOR HELP?

Click the link below for an investment professional to reach out to you.

<https://www.omni403b.com/PlanDetail>

New accounts may be opened with the following approved service providers.

AMERICAN CENTURY SERVICES LLC
AMERICAN FUND CAPITAL GUARDIAN
AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL RIVERSOURCE
ASPIRE FINANCIAL SERVICES
CAPITAL BANK TRUST
CONFIDENTIAL BROKERAGE
CONFIDENTIAL PLANNING MULTICHOICE
COREBRIDGE FINANCIAL FORMERLY AIG VALIC
EQUITABLE FORMERLY AXA
FIDELITY MANAGEMENT TRUST
FIDUCIARY TRUST INTL FRANKLIN TEMPLETON
INVESCO OPPENHEIMERFUNDS
LINCOLN INVESTMENT PLANNING
METLIFE
NY LIFE INS ANNUITY CORP
PACIFIC LIFE ANNUITY
PENSERV SMARTSAV FORMERLY FORESTERS
PUTNAM INVESTMENTS
SECURITY BENEFIT
SECURITY MUTUAL LIFE OF NY
T. ROWE PRICE TRUST COMPANY
THE LEGEND GROUP A LINCOLN INVESTMENT COMPANY
VANGUARD FIDUCIARY TRUST CO
VOYA FINANCIAL VRIAC