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A look at activities
in the Eldred Central School District

SCHOOL

A Special Supplement to the Sullivan County Democrat

SCENE



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CALLICOON, NY

Carpentieri takes the reins at Mackenzie Elementary

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

There is a new face at George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School, Principal Michael A. Carpentieri.

Carpentieri has an established background in education, having last taught at the Chester Union Free School District in Orange County. He started in special education.

Carpentieri has been enjoying his time in Eldred.

"I love it," he said. "It's been wonderful interacting with the students and the staff. It's a phenomenal community and phenomenal Elementary School. Both the faculty and the support staff have both been welcoming and just wonderful to communicate with."

While he is currently the Mackenzie Elementary School principal, he is still teaching a self-contained dual-grade classroom with fourth- and fifth-graders.

Carpentieri comes to the Eldred CSD with two masters' degrees from Iona College, one in Teaching and another in Literacy and Special Education.

He also graduated from SUNY New Paltz after receiving a Certificate of Advanced Study in Educational Administration and Leadership.

When Carpentieri is not teaching

and leading the elementary school, he loves spending time with his wife Heather, and their four young children, Paige, Hadley, Nicholas, and Charlotte.

"They are the light of my life," said Carpentieri.

Born in New Jersey but raised in Cornwall-on-Hudson and making his way to New Windsor where he currently resides, Carpentieri is an avid sports fan and roots for the NY Giants and the NY Mets.

And if that isn't enough to keep Carpentieri busy, he is also a Major in the New York Army National Guard.

"I'm an officer, and I'm currently the Executive Officer of the Garrison Command at Camp Smith training site."

He has previously commanded the 1569th Transportation Company in New Windsor, and in 2008-2009 deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with Joint Task Force Phoenix serving as the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) Executive Officer.

Carpentieri says with the National Guard, he has drilled every month on the weekend and trains during the summer.

Moreover, Carpentieri says that



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Michael A. Carpentieri is the new principal at George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School.

his background in education will help in his new role at Mackenzie.

"We're trying to push forward an integrated teaching model here at Mackenzie Elementary School. What that means is we are integrating our special education students into the general education classroom with special education, teacher support, and instruction," added Carpentieri.

And with his background, he feels he could help teachers understand some of the special education requirements.

Carpentieri says he is up to the challenge and added, "There's a lot going on here at Mackenzie!"

Goals

As the new principal, Carpentieri says he has goals that he wants to

accomplish at Mackenzie, including providing more extracurricular activities for students.

With the Makers Lab and student government, Carpentieri is well on his way to reaching that goal.

"We're hoping to create almost like a school catalog of activities that parents can choose from in the spring that could be based on intramurals, or it can be based on an academic club or an enrichment club that a parent or a teacher wants to run," said Carpentieri.

Another is to have 95 percent attendance amongst all students for the entire year.

"It's been very difficult with having to quarantine students and isolate students in the current environment," said Carpentieri.

The goal is to have the students in the classroom as much as they can, and after almost more than a year of hybrid learning, Carpentieri says he welcomes the change.

Another goal that Carpentieri has is for the fourth-grade students to score three or higher on the New York State Science assessment.

"They may need additional support in any topics that they have and are struggling with," said Carpentieri.

Using a mentorship program with the Junior-Senior Honor Society students, Carpentieri hopes this will help those students reach the assessment goals.

School Scene

'A Look at Activities in the Eldred Central School'

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Committed to students' safety

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

Much like last year, the COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting the lives of the students and staff at the Eldred Central School District.

With the recommendations from the New York State



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES PHOTO

Keeping students and staff safe while providing in-school experiences and advantages is of utmost importance in the Eldred Central School District.

Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control ever changing, the district is committed to having all students in-person as long as it is safe to do so.

Since the pandemic, the air system has been upgraded with new filters, and also, an effort has been made to bring in more fresh air from the outside to circulate inside.

"I am so very thankful that we are able to have in-person learning. I, my teachers, my parents, my staff members, we have all worked together so hard to make sure that the students remain in-person," said Eldred Junior-Senior High School Principal, Ms. Traci Ferreira.

She says it's been hard on the students, and she has seen the effects on some students being away from in-person instruction

and it has been an adjustment.

"I just have to remind myself, the kindergarteners that we have this year, they don't remember pre-pandemic. They only remember COVID," said Ferreira.

The new George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School, Principal Mr. Michael A. Carpentieri said, "As a principal, the safety and welfare of my students is my number one priority. However, I also have to ensure that students are in class as much as possible. And I think there are ways that we can mitigate risk, and get students back in class more often."

Carpentieri added, "It's a better experience for the faculty member, it's a better experience for the administrator and for the students, especially for the younger age children."



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What's New at Mackenzie

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

The Eldred School District will have a space where students will be able to stretch their imaginations and create in the next school year.

Using the former computer lab at the George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School, Principal Mr. Michael A. Carpentieri says the space will be converted to an area where students and staff can utilize it for several things.

Carpentieri said the six-grade science class was experimenting; the science could have been conducted in the Maker's Space.

With flexible seating, the room could be utilized for Parent Teacher Association meetings or faculty meetings and anything that cannot be conducted in a typical classroom setting.

"It's a space where students are going to feel comfortable outside their general classroom, where they can do a lab or any type of ac-

tivity that doesn't work inside a classroom," said Carpentieri.

Carpentieri says the space needs to be adapted so all grades at the elementary school can use it, and the flexible seating planned for the room will allow that.

Carpentieri also added that the skills the students learn in the Maker's Space could be useful for students transitioning to Junior and Senior high school grade levels.

"Ms. Traci Ferreira [Eldred Junior-

Senior High School Principal] and I have talked about that a lot. We really want to make sure there's a standardization almost between both schools. We don't want to operate in silos; we want to do things together," said Carpentieri.

Student Government

For the first time at the elementary school, the students will be able to participate in Student Government.

"I think it's really important that

all the stakeholders have a voice in the school. That includes parents, taxpayers, teachers, support staff, but it also includes the students, and the students need to feel that they have a say," said Carpentieri.

The student government is currently open to the fifth and sixth graders who can run for president, vice president, and student council.

And the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders get to vote on the best candidate after speeches and the campaign has finished.

Carpentieri said the students then vote in a voting booth, like in an actual election.

The sixth grader with the most votes becomes the president, and the fifth-grader with the most votes becomes the vice-president.

There are 12 representatives total with a president, vice-president, and five from each grade fifth and sixth.

Carpentieri says he meets with the student council once or twice a month to go over the issues of the council during their lunchtime.

"Some of the decisions that they started to make were the location of the buddy bench, and so they're also going to have a say in where the sensory walkway goes," said Carpentieri.

Students who are not on the council can bring their ideas or



With the new placement of the playground, George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School will now have a basketball court for all grade levels.

concerns to the student council meetings, much like a town resident would go before a town board with a concern, and it will be discussed and debated on.

Carpentieri said, "I try to guide

them so they can think about all the decisions they have to make sometimes as a principal or as a teacher, and, hopefully, they're getting a different perspective of that as well."

Buildings and Grounds

Carpentieri said some upgrades have been made to the building and grounds of the George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School. They created a "courtyard" between the two building outlets, allowing a paved area around their newly constructed playground.

"This has allowed us to have outdoor recess as the building and grounds crew can now prepare this area after inclement weather," said Carpentieri.

With the new playground not in the same location as the old playground, the elementary school has added a basketball court in the old location for all students to enjoy with the retractable backboard that can be adjusted for different ages.

As of presstime, the playground has been finished as they are awaiting rubber matting around the playground for the student's safety.

Carpentieri said they are looking to create an outdoor space/classroom where students and teachers can bring the instruction outside if weather permits.

Furthermore, Carpentieri said they have tried to have a rock wall installed in the gymnasium, which he said would allow students an opportunity to climb both vertically and horizontally with the elementary school's trained gym teacher, Mr. Todd Keast.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS
George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School's newest playground will soon be ready for fun.



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Getting a head start on an Associate's Degree

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

The Eldred Junior-Senior High School is working with SUNY Sullivan on the beginning stages of a partnership that will allow students to obtain an Associate's Degree by the time they graduate high school.

According to the Eldred Junior-Senior High School Principal, Ms. Traci Ferreira, the students would be able to start the process in ninth grade. By the time they are in their junior year, they would already have 42 credits towards a 62-credit Associate's Degree from SUNY Sullivan by the time they reach the end of their senior year.

SUNY Sullivan President Jay

Quaintance said, "I've been involved with the Early College movement in New York and nationally for many years. Research shows that access to college-level courses early in high school is a strong factor influencing college completion and future success after graduation. SUNY Sullivan is working across Sullivan County to provide this level of access to college and ensure that all our young people have a bright future. We thank Eldred for working with us to make this a reality for their students."

Ferreira says this gives parents and guardians a chance to save money for their students by obtain-

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Students getting ready to broadcast the morning announcements on YouTube in the new Video Center.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



With new equipment, the Eldred Central School District Community Gym has reopened.

ing the degree while in high school.

The Eldred School board has agreed to fund 60 percent of the cost of the credits, which leaves the families to pay about \$25 a credit, which compared to SUNY Sullivan's rate of \$75 a credit, the reduced price will be a major saving for those students who want to continue their education.

Ferreira also says that because the student is not in college, they do not have to pay the additional fees that come with being a college student, like a dorm room or meal plan or student fees.

The Eldred School District has offered college credits to students in the past. Still, it has been just college credits that could be transferred after graduation, and it was only available to juniors

and seniors.

"The idea is for students who know they want to go to college and they might not be sure what to do in college, but they want to try it. This is a safe way of trying college-level classes at a greatly reduced price," said Ferreira.

Video Center

The Junior and Senior High School (JSHS) now have a production center where students can give morning announcements, not over the loudspeaker but instead over YouTube.

Tyler Laput, a teaching assistant, was talking about streamlining the accounts and getting the students more into video production and podcasting.

Since all the JSHS classrooms

have smartboards, the teacher can use the YouTube channel so the students can watch.

Another teaching assistant, Lisa Marie, is working with Laput to work with the students and get them familiar with all the new aspects of video production and the Director of Technology, Jedd Jacke.

"They can learn the splicing, the video production mix with the audio production and how it all works together," said Ferreira.

Community Gym

The community gym at the JSHS will reopen to the public after being closed for several weeks.

Why was it closed? It was getting a much-needed makeover and new equipment.

The community is allowed to use the gym during non-school hours, and they have their own private entrance, so there is no interaction with the students.

Some of the new stuff in the gym are cross-fit equipment, squat machines, bench press, and incline bikes.

"We've got several new treadmills. We've got a brand new stair climber, stairmaster," said Ferreira.

With the recent ribbon cutting, the gym is now open and ready for the public to come in and get fit. See the school website or call for more information.

Computer Graphics

Junior-Senior High School Principal Traci Ferreira says she is happy that Computer Graphics will be part of the school's instruction with the new teacher, Andrew Latini.

The school has gotten new computers that are loaded with the latest graphic decision and illustration programs.

"A lot of new jobs require that Adobe skill set that we are now going to be able to offer," said Ferreira.

The computer graphics class is ready to expand, says Ferreira, as they hope to get more students involved and more digital cameras and a 3D printer for the students.



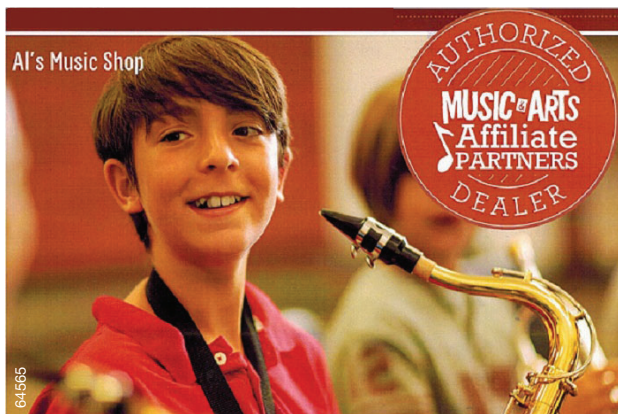
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Odyssey of the Mind teaches teamwork, problem-solving

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

New to the Eldred School District is Odyssey of the Mind, which is a program where students will learn and compete in teams on a problem.

It is something that the new George Ross Mackenzie Elementary School Principal, Mr. Michael Carpentieri, has brought to the table.

"I thought it would be a great asset to bring here to Mackenzie Elementary School," said Carpentieri, who has experience with the program. "It's a way to enrich students' learning and team building."

Carpentieri says the program encourages students to think

outside the box with problem-solving.

The teams receive a problem early in the school year and have to solve five different issues: vehicle, technical, classics, structure, and theatrical.

There will be two teams; the primary team will consist of Kindergarten through second grade students and the other team, the intermediate team, or division one team, composed of third to fifth graders.

Unfortunately, not every student was able to be on the team, as over 75 students had applied to be on the team, and only two teams of seven each were chosen.

Carpentieri said the primary team does not compete formally; however, the division one team does and the major tournament will be held in early March 2022.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Teamwork in solving problems is the name of the game in the Odyssey of the Mind program.

Working together, the students who are in the program are preparing for the major competition in March 2022.



"I wanted to give students activities outside the school day and outside of school hours, to allow them to be as successful as possible," said Carpentieri.

Mackenzie Elementary's two kindergarten teachers, Ms. Erin Startup and Ms. Samantha Majuri, coached the primary team. The Division 1 Team is coached by Ms. Miranda Martell, a third-grade teacher, and Ms. Mary Kate Paulus, a fifth-grade teacher.

Joann Burrows-Wood, a fifth grade teacher, coordinates the entire program.

"They're doing a wonderful job in enriching the students' learning and their team building and

it's been a great asset right now," said Carpentieri.

Moreover, Carpentieri said that the feedback from the parents have been positive, and they reached out to understand the program more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched on every aspect of our lives, and that also disturbed the Odyssey of the Mind, but Carpentieri says he's worked to keep students and teachers safe.

Carpentieri said, "I realized that we need to provide more extracurricular activities for elementary-age students; we need to be able to provide those opportunities for students to find their passions."



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