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Roscoe Central School welcomes new principal Robin Francisco

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

The Roscoe Central School District has a new Pre-K-12 leader at the helm, but she's no stranger to the school community. Robin Francisco, a longtime member of the RCS family, has stepped into the role of Pre-K-12 Principal, bringing a fresh wave of energy and enthusiasm.

Francisco, who officially took on the position on July 1, 2024, has been part of the Roscoe Central School District for over two decades. She started her journey in 2000 as a special education teacher and later served as assistant principal for 12 years. As a parent of three children—two RCS graduates and one current student—she knows firsthand how important a positive and engaging learning environment is for students, teachers, and families.

"I have learned that part of being an effective leader is taking care of my staff, as well as my students," Francisco said. "Taking care of my faculty and staff is a way of putting students first because when I take care of them, they take care of students."

A fresh approach to school culture

Since taking over as principal, Francisco has wasted no time in making a difference. She has focused on uplifting faculty and staff, ensuring that a positive and supportive culture trickles down to the students.

Her first year has been filled with creative initiatives aimed at boosting morale and building a sense of community among teachers and staff. One of the highlights was the "Duckin' Out for Summer" project, where each faculty and staff member was given a small rubber duck to take on their summer adventures. They snapped pictures with their ducks at beaches, on hikes,



Roscoe Pre-K-12 Principal Robin Francisco

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

or even just relaxing at home with a good book. Francisco compiled these snapshots into a slideshow and played it for staff on their first day back, a fun and lighthearted way to start the school year.

Another big hit was the Teacher Olympics, a friendly competition where teachers participated in events with a humorous twist—like throwing a paper plate for the discus throw or racing office chairs in the 100-meter dash. "It was a great way to build camaraderie," Francisco shared. "The faculty had a blast, and it set a really positive tone for the school year."

Other thoughtful gestures included surprise "parking tickets" left on teachers' cars at the end

of the first full week of school, reminding them that their hard work was appreciated, and "The Blue Devil Buzz," a weekly newsletter that often includes secret messages rewarding those who take the time to read it with small treats.

During Halloween, Francisco organized adult trick-or-treat stations around the school, where faculty and staff could collect fun items like pens, stress balls, and other goodies. The initiative was so popular that she's already planning to expand it next year to include classrooms.

Community roots

Francisco's connection to Roscoe goes beyond her role as princi-

pal. As a community member and parent, she understands the needs and concerns of local families. This perspective is particularly important as the district prepares for its upcoming merger, an adjustment that will bring changes but also new opportunities for growth.

"We are in an interesting point in time as we transition into a merged district," Francisco said. "It has been an honor to lead RCS in its final year as an independent district, and I want to make sure we carry forward our traditions while also embracing the positive changes ahead."

With the transition process already in motion, Francisco is committed to ensuring a smooth shift for students, staff, and the community. While many key decisions, like the school mascot and colors, will be determined by the new school board, she is confident that student voices will be heard.

"I believe our students play a huge role in shaping the school culture," Francisco said. "But it's our job as educators to guide them in that process and lead by example."

A Principal with heart

When asked about her journey from teacher to principal, Francisco said she is both honored and excited to take on the new role.

"It's a change for me, but I feel ready to tackle it," she said. "I love what I do, and I've truly enjoyed serving as principal this school year."

For Francisco, leadership isn't just about overseeing the day-to-day operations of a school—it's about fostering an environment where both students and staff can thrive. Whether through small gestures of appreciation, fun team-building activities, or thoughtful traditions, she is working to make RCS not just a school, but a place where people feel valued and inspired to learn and grow.

Inside Roscoe's First Annual Read-A-Thon

STORY AND PHOTO
BY
PATRICIO ROBAYO

Students at Roscoe Central School are turning pages with a new enthusiasm, thanks to the school's first-ever Read-A-Thon, an initiative launched by the Academic Intervention Support (AIS) Department. Designed to foster a love for reading while adding a touch of friendly competition, the program is already making waves in the classroom and beyond.

The Read-A-Thon, which began in early February, serves as a build-up to Read Across America Week, a nationwide literacy celebration that coincided with Dr. Seuss's birthday on March 2. Throughout the month, students from pre-K to sixth grade log their reading minutes at home and in school, competing for prizes that include medals, book vending machine tokens, and a grand champion title.

"It has been outstanding," said Emily Miner, an Academic

The program has inspired a competitive spirit among students.

Intervention Support provider and middle school social studies teacher. "One thing for sure, I've seen students finishing their assignments and immediately reaching for their independent reading books. It's created an excitement for reading that is wonderful to witness."

The Read-A-Thon features multiple incentives: weekly top readers earn a token for the book vending machine, while the top reader from each grade level receives a medal. The class that accumulates the most reading minutes earns a pizza party, and the overall Grand Champion Reader wins a bookstore gift card.

Jackie Day, another AIS educa-

tor, said that students are particularly thrilled with the book vending machine, which was obtained through a grant. "They're excited to get a new book and press the button," she said. "It's become a huge attraction at the school. They used to only get tokens for their birthdays, so this initiative gives them another opportunity to win books."

The program has inspired a competitive spirit among students. "There's a set of twins in fifth grade who are massive readers," Miner shared. "They keep going back and forth, trying to outdo each other to win the token. It's incredible to see."

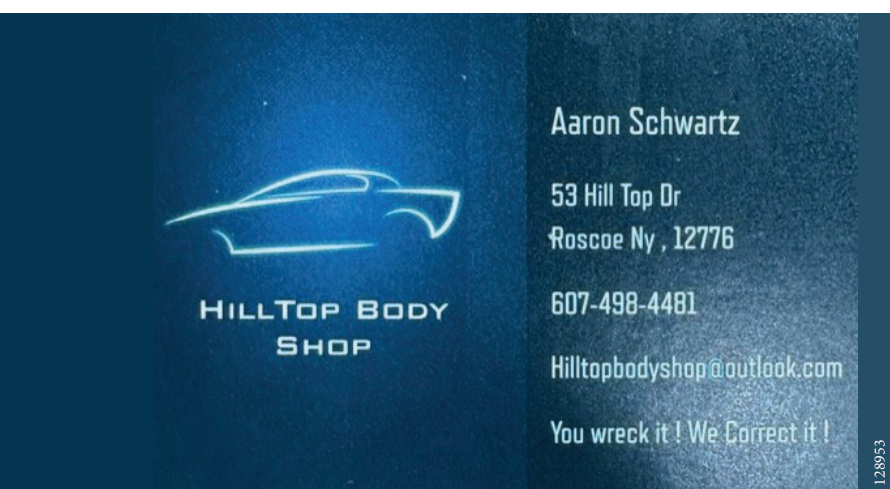
Beyond the Read-A-Thon, the school is also incorporating another literacy initiative known as The Walking Classroom. Funded by a Sullivan 180 grant, this program allows students to listen to audio lessons while walking, blending physical activity with academic en-

richment. "They're getting exercise while learning, and then they write a summary afterward," said sixth-grader Melany, a recent Read-A-Thon winner. "It helps me absorb the information better."

The impact of the Read-A-Thon is already evident. Teachers report that students are more eager to read independently, both at school and at home. "Even kids who weren't necessarily readers before are getting involved," Day said. "They want to participate and track their minutes, and that's exactly what we hoped for."

Parents have also been engaged in the process, ensuring their children log their reading minutes and even reaching out to teachers to make sure their time is counted. "We've had parents messaging us at the last minute, making sure we record their child's minutes correctly," said Day. "That level of involvement is a great sign."

Miner said there was a broader



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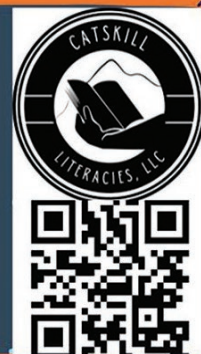
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benefit of the program: recognizing and celebrating students who might not always be in the spotlight.


“We celebrate athletes and performers all the time, but this Read-A-Thon is an opportunity to celebrate students who love to read. There’s a girl who practically hugged the reading chart because she was so excited about her progress,” she said.

“We wear matching shirts every Friday when we collect the logs

that say, ‘Nothing beats reading,’” Day shared. “The only complaint we’ve had is that teachers wanted to join in too!”

As the program wrapped up with the Green Eggs and Ham Breakfast on March 2, where top readers were honored, educators are already looking ahead.

“This is just the beginning,” Miner said. “We want to keep expanding literacy programs and getting kids excited about books.”



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From left, Roscoe teacher and Student Government advisor Pam Carpenter, Anastasia Niforatos, Brooke Coman, Logan Thomas and teacher and advisor Cindy Hyzer.

Roscoe Central High School student government: leadership, spirit and the merger ahead



STORY AND PHOTO BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

At Roscoe Central School District High School, student government isn't

just about planning events—it's about making decisions, keeping students informed, and preparing for the district merger.

Leadership in Action

Student government members help make sure their classmates have a voice, especially regard-

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ing the merger between Roscoe and Livingston Manor school districts. "One thing we've been talking about is making sure students get accurate information about the merger," said Cindy Hyzer, a teacher working with student government.

Pam Carpenter, another advisor, said, "We're making sure students are heard—positives, negatives—and that they know how to find answers."

Sophomores Logan Thomas, Brooke Coman, and Anastasia Niforatos are among the students taking leadership roles. "I wanted to help make decisions and be a part of helping the school," said Coman. Niforatos added, "I also wanted to get involved and help."

Building school spirit

Student government organizes events like Spirit Week and Spirit Day. "Spirit Week is when high school and elementary students dress up to prepare for Spirit Day," said Coman. "Each day has a theme, and you earn points leading up to Spirit Day."

Spirit Day is a long-time tradition with grade-level competitions. "It's a full-day competition where students work as a team for their grades and compete against others," said Carpenter. Hyzer said, "We cover events in different areas so every student can participate in some way."

Preparing for the merger

With the merger coming up, student government is working to make it a smooth process. Niforatos is looking forward to it. "I think we're going to have more opportunities. I want to run for student council after the merger to help make things better."

A big concern is making sure students feel like one school, not two separate groups. "Next year, student council should focus on making sure everyone feels together," said Niforatos. "It shouldn't be Roscoe vs. Manor—it should be all of us."

Hyzer said student leaders are gathering student concerns through class-wide Google Docs. "We've sent out documents so students can share their thoughts, and we can speak for them," she said. "People say they want student input—we'll see how much they listen when the time comes."

Why join Student Government?

For students thinking about joining, current members say go for it. "It's a good way to help your school and your class," said Coman. "It's fun, and it feels good to make decisions that matter."

Niforatos agreed. "You can make a difference in your school. It feels good to be part of the decisions."

For Thomas, the reason is simple. "If you want to help your school and be involved in decisions, join student government."



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