



Tusker Nation

SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS
FOR SCSD FAMILIES

Important Updates

- January 8, 2019 Board of Education meeting at SMS in Library, 7 p.m.
- New Tusker Talk episodes available - a new podcast from Somers Schools. Search Tusker Talk on your podcast app and subscribe, or look under the [Community](#) tab on the SCSD homepage.

Happy Holiday Happenings in Somers



Clockwise from top left: Middle School concert, Grade 4 holiday handicrafts, SHS LEOs and Peer Leaders collect donations for gift drive, kindergarten classes decorate gingerbread houses.

New High School Schedule Explained



Principal Mark Bayer and junior Max Caron discuss next year's high school schedule change. Watch [here](#).

Somers High School will be adopting a new schedule starting September 2019. Rather than the current schedule of nine periods each day with 41-minute classes, the new schedule will be a "rotating drop schedule" with six periods each day with 55-minute classes. The two classes that are dropped from a student's schedule on any given day are added back in the following day, when two different classes are dropped. Students will still have the opportunity to enroll in the current limit of eight classes. Lunch period will be a 51-minute Community Lunch, during which all students eat at the same time and can seek extra help from teachers or meet with clubs.

"The schedule we currently follow was adopted during the Industrial Revolution and was designed for rote learning," says Principal Mark Bayer. "The purpose of the new schedule is to allow students time to digest what they're learning and fully engage in the subject."

Click to watch a the Facebook Live discussion about the schedule change with Mr. Bayer and student council members. Click here to see sample schedules and read Frequently Asked Questions. Mr. Bayer will hold an information session for parents and students on January 31, 2019 at 7 p.m. in the SHS Auditorium.

Learning Through Lettuce



Halia Gonzalez, Julia Wilkinson, and Kevin Grant display their healthy greens at the end of Quarter 1.

The seventh-grade Technology and Engineering students carefully measured the bright green lettuce leaves poking out of plastic cups.

"Mine are growing well," says Christian Brooks. "At the end of the quarter we are going to have a salad party."

The students are growing hydroponic vegetables in Matt Lugo's class to better understand how vegetables can be grown inside, using water, artificial light, and plant food. The project also has a global citizenship component.

"This way of growing vegetables can change people's lives in countries where they don't have a lot of rain or ways to make a living," says 7th-grader Peter Lewis. "Not only does it give them food to

eat, but they can also sell it."

The hydroponic system set up in Lugo's classroom is rigged with a timer for the extra bright fluorescent lights and the pump that runs the water through the PVC pipes.

"We've found through experimenting that the plants need a rest from constant light and food, just like us," says Lugo.

Lugo's previous classes have grown peppers, cherry tomatoes, and sunflowers. Hydroponic vegetables are even more nutritious than those grown in the ground outside, says Lugo, because they don't have to expend their energy searching in the soil for nutrients. The students put plant food right in the water so the plants can concentrate all their energy on growing big, and doing it quickly.

Freezin' For A Great Reason



Members of the Somers LEOs Club and others plunging into the Long Island Sound to raise money for Special Olympics.

Seventy-eight Somers High School students were "Freezin' For a Reason" in November - \$39,749 reasons, to be exact. That is the amount of money the members of the Somers LEOs (Leadership Experience and Opportunity) Club raised for the 10th annual Polar Plunge for Special Olympics New York. The LEOs Club is the high school branch of the Lion's Club, an international community service organization. They came in first in Hudson Valley Polar Plunge public school fundraising and second in overall state school fundraising.

Senior Brandon LaSpina first suggested participating in the Plunge last year, and the group raised \$27,000. This year they aimed higher and still went well beyond their goal of \$30,000.

LaSpina first became involved in Special Olympics events in middle school while helping out with a basketball tournament. When the teams of Special Olympics athletes arrived for the tournament, LaSpina said he knew he'd found a passion.

"That first hug they gave me, that was the moment I became so engaged," LaSpina said, referring to the group of Special Olympics athletes who train and compete at his school. "They're always smiling. It's so great to see."

Special Olympics New York has 68,547 athletes training and competing year-round in 22 Olympics-style sports. Athletes and their families or caregivers are never charged to participate. It costs \$400 to support training and competition for one athlete for one sports season. With the amount the LEOs raised, they will support 95 athletes for an entire season.

The Somers LEOs who raised more than \$1,000 each include Jennifer Acocella, Devon DiMichele, Stephanie Gillis, Jared Hachmyer, Karlene & Katrina Kurtz, Brandon LaSpina, Ryan Mahoney, Isabella & Natalia Rukaj, Daniel Turner and Justin Vassallo.

Handicraft Tradition Continues



Jewelry on display at Primrose PTA's Holiday Handicraft event.

Holiday Happiness is Primrose Elementary PTA's largest fundraiser of the year and a community tradition, now in its 46th year. The money raised from this event will go towards field trips, assemblies, books and free events that Primrose students, families and teachers get to enjoy throughout the year. Thank you to all who helped in making this year's 2018 Holiday Happiness a huge success!



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**Looking to make a difference?
Be a TEAM Tuskers Mentor for a Somers
student. Contact Midge Miller at
midge22@comcast.net**

Spotlight on Somers: Safety and Security



Watch Superintendent Dr. Raymond Blanch and Altaris Group security expert John LaPlaca discuss improvements in safety and security in Somers Schools, as well as plans for the future.



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