



## Goal-Setting to Move the District Forward

Elmsford schools staff and others are looking ahead. We have formed a Strategic Planning Committee to help write a five-year Strategic Plan to set priorities and consider the best use of our resources to achieve high levels of learning. It's exciting work.



The committee includes staff, students, parents, community members and others, whose discussions are led by Sean Brady of Prism Decision

Systems, a company that helps schools set and achieve goals. The plan will take into account the many changes that have taken place in the past several years, supplanting the Comprehensive District Educational Plan.

We have begun by looking into data in our district, among them early literacy assessments, state assessments, graduation and dropout rates, suspension rates, special education classification rates, and others. This will help us set performance targets district-wide with three-year and five-year targets.

We will then look at the national research in the areas in need of improvement, apply it as we can to our district and make a plan to improve student performance. This fall, we will set up building-level committees to form individual action plans that align with those of the district.

One of the things I like best about this approach is that these plans are dynamic and can change when change is needed. The teams are to meet every year and change targets and strategies as necessary. This kind of thinking, cooperation and discussion can change the way we all see our schools, and give us a way to work seamlessly together.

While we look forward to a great new year, I hope you have a great summer, one in which you can spend time with your children and enjoy the many blessings of life in Elmsford.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Peters  
Superintendent of Schools

### Special Awards 2009

#### *Alexander Hamilton High School Student Achievement Awards*

Joby Jacob                      Shani Varghese  
Russell Tobias                Tancy Thomas

#### *Michael Arciola Memorial Scholarship*

Hashem Nasarat

#### *Michael Arciola History Award*

Russell Tobias

#### *Elmsford Teachers' Association Scholarship*

Pietro Mazzella

#### *Elmsford Parent Teacher Association Scholarships*

Jensine Thomas  
Michael Janos

#### *Tommy Higgins Memorial Scholarship*

sponsored by the American Italian Club of Elmsford  
Craig Jacoby

#### *Elmsford Rotary Scholarship*

Michael Janos

#### *Joe Saltzman Elmsford Rotary Service Above Self Award*

Arnold Lane

#### *New York Blood Center Scholarship*

Kristin Cherian

#### *2009 Rotary Scholarship*

Jensine Thomas

#### *North Elmsford Civic Association – Melvin Dixon Scholarship*

Kirstine Jessamy & Tyonna Smith

#### *Raymond Agostini Memorial Scholarship Fund*

Joby Jacob

#### *State of New York, Office of the State Comptroller Award*

Michael Janos

#### *State of New York, Office of the Attorney General Triple "C" Award*

Juan Carlos Garcia

#### *Kiwanis Club of Elmsford Scholarship*

Russell Tobias, Kristin Cherian

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# A New Principal for Hamilton

New Principal Marc P. Baiocco, Jr., has taken the helm at Alexander Hamilton High School, after five years as assistant principal at Lincoln High School in Yonkers.

"I am excited to be here," he said. "I like the atmosphere, and the high level of student participation. I want to continue building on the successes of this school."

To that end, he will seek a cadre of students whose goal will be an Advanced Regents designation on their diplomas. A regular Regents diploma is achieved when students pass five Regents exams: math, global history, U.S. History, and science, with a score of 65 percent or more. For the highly respected Advanced Regents diploma, students must take additional credits in a language other than English and pass an exam in that language; pass an additional Regents exam in science; and take an additional set of math courses and pass the associated Regents exam. There is also an advanced Regents Diploma with Honors bestowed on students who take the additional credits for an advanced diploma and achieve an average of 90 percent or more on all Regents Exams.

For these students and others, he's hoping to implement new rigorous elective courses, and more foreign-language options. Look too for him to establish a more collaborative, collegial

approach among teachers, allowing them and others concerned to share in the decision-making process.

Some of Mr. Baiocco's experience might be called "value-added." He is a consultant to the New York State Youth Court Program on the subject of minor's rights. In Youth Court, which is administered by the Family Court, young offenders appear for a sentencing hearing before a court of their peers. Sentences are generally rehabilitative, and involve community service, restitution, and service at the Youth Court itself.

Formerly a social studies teacher at Gorton High School in Yonkers, Mr. Baiocco served as a Law Magnet Teacher and moved up to Law Magnet Coordinator at the school, which featured a curriculum with mock trials, moot court proceedings and other pre-law activities.

Mr. Baiocco wants to create professional learning communities in the 450-student school, fostering greater collaboration among teachers.



## They Are Off to New Lives. **We Thank Them for Jobs Well Done!**



### Frank Holst

It might be difficult to imagine the district without Athletics Director Frank Holst, but you can be sure that even though he has retired you'll see

him around. Elmsford is his place, and always has been.

"My mother was a student here," he said. "My DNA has been here the district's entire existence."

But, after 34 years, "it's enough. I'm young enough to enjoy the life I have left," he said. "It's been a wonderful, wonderful time. It wasn't a job; I spent every day doing my hobbies! I got to play with the kids and get paid for it. It's been a wonderful ride, and a blessing."



### Paul Benben

After more than 30 years, Director of Music Paul Benben is taking on a new full-time assignment: Farmer. He's turning his hobby and little business

into a somewhat bigger business, growing and selling heirloom vegetables at his Putnam Valley home.

He's had a fine time, said the former professional trumpet player. He used his skills as a musician and his ability to work in new technologies to teach music, even to students who may never have felt they had a chance to deal with complex musical genres.

"These have been really enjoyable years," he said. "The administration has been supportive. And I have to say, the band this year was the most dedicated ever."

He said he's leaving on a high note, and that's how he always wanted it.



### Kathleen Hamel

This year's Moving Up Ceremony at Dixson was especially emotional for Kathleen Hamel, who has taught the youngest students

here for 20 years. The ceremony was dedicated to her.

She said staying home is going to be quite an adjustment. "I spent most of my time here," she said. "I love the people. I love the children. Now, many of them come back to say hello, and they're college graduates."

And that's all the time she had to talk. It was time to say good-bye to the last of her little pupils, and she didn't want to miss a moment.

# Graduation!

## Alexander Hamilton High School is proud to present the **Graduating Class of 2009**

William Barksdale  
Dante Barrera  
Tyler Batiste  
Marcus Bazan  
Jarrett Blanks  
Kaseem Bouche  
Joseph Breese  
Julianne Brodsky  
Jonathan Caicedo  
Kristin Cherian  
Amanda Cherry  
Devona Coke  
Diamond Daly  
Jorge De La Rosa  
Franklin Delgado  
Galdiany Desroches  
Aylwin Franco  
Juan Carlos Garcia  
Frankie Grixti  
Joby Jacob  
Craig Jacoby  
Michael Janos  
Kirstine Jessamy  
Nicole Keene  
Arnold Lane, Jr.  
Melissa Lawrance  
Shereen Lightbourne  
Paris London  
Collin Mariano  
Pietro Mazzella  
LeMaur Muckle-Heard  
America Munoz

Hashem Nasarat  
Martin Noli  
Angelica O'Hara  
Karissa Ortega  
Ronnie Ortega  
Gina Orzuna-Ramires  
Harold Ospina  
Peter Prestigiacomio  
Freddy Quispe  
Jesty Raju  
Jose Ramirez  
Nichole Ramo  
Pablo Rosas  
Kevin Rupnarain  
Sandra Salinas  
Julia Satin  
Jonathan Schofield  
Marconny Segura  
Imani Shabazz  
Tyonna Smith  
Catherine Takahashi  
Shenice Talbert  
Dominique Taylor  
Alvin Thomas  
Jensine Thomas  
Tancy Thomas  
Russell Tobias  
Shani Varghese  
Christopher Velez  
Connye Villa Larios  
Joseph-Carl Villanueva

**"Our teachers taught us to care about this world. The class of 2009 has been through the major events of the past decade – 9/11, the War on Terror, Hurricane Katrina, a failing economy, and the historic election of President Obama. As we grew older, we learned to look at these events with different eyes."**

*—Valedictorian Joby Jacob*

# Moving Up! At Grady and Dixon



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