

SUMMER 2024

GOOD NEWS



SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



we DID it



conGRADulation!

Congratulations, CLASS OF 2024

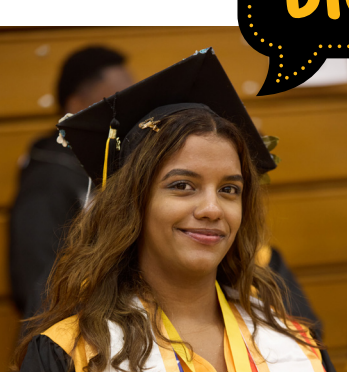
We're so proud of our Class of 2024 graduates! This year's **Corcoran, Henninger, ITC, Nottingham, and PSLA at Fowler** graduates will be continuing their education at colleges and universities, serving our country in the military, and entering the workforce. Wherever their paths may take them, we are cheering them on and we look forward to hearing about the successes of this newest group of #SCSDAlumni!



DREAM BIG



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A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear SCSD Families,

Our students are now happily engaged in our summer learning, and I hope you'll follow us on Facebook (@SyracuseCitySchools) and Instagram (@SyracuseSchools) to keep up with the latest!

In this newsletter, you'll hear about the exciting activities that students took part in to wrap up the 2023-24 school year. Webster students learned to swim through in-school lessons; ELMS students became agents of change and promoted literacy throughout the community; Corcoran students improved their campus and community through meaningful welding projects; PSLA students improved their school cafeteria by successfully advocating for a Lunch Lounge; and so much more.

Of course, don't miss all the highlights featuring our recent Class of 2024 graduates – including graduation photos, scholarship achievements, and other accolades!

There is so much to be proud of here in the SCSD. Thank you for the role you play in supporting our students and our district!

Sincerely,

Tony



IMPORTANT DATES

August 2024

- 9 Board of Education Meeting
- 16 Last Day of Summer School
- 26 Board of Education Work Session
- 27 Summer Graduation
- 27 Board of Education Policy Meeting

September 2024

- 2 **Labor Day - No School**
- 4 First Day of School 
- 11 Board of Education Meeting
- 20 Board of Education Audit Session
- 23 Board of Education Work Session
- 24 Board of Education Policy Meeting



CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2024!

If you would like to see photos from graduation, check out our Flickr page: [Flickr.com/photos/scsd/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/scsd/)

Student & Staff Spotlights



SCSD Juniors Named QuestBridge College Prep Scholars

Several **Corcoran, Henninger, and Nottingham** juniors have received the QuestBridge College Prep Scholar Award, providing them with exclusive events, workshops, networking, and resources to help them become college ready. Congratulations to Corcoran students **Fatima Al Maliki, Shaima Osman, and My'Yanah Alezie**; Henninger students **Soha Alghazeer and Eh Hso Cruise**; and Nottingham students **Joseph Bagalwa, Jenifer Kayitesi, Jesse Smith IV, and Azmira Suljic**!



Students and Families Enjoy Math through Music and Art at The Everson Museum

This June, the SCSD Office of Family Engagement – along with our Department of Math and Department of Fine Arts – hosted an Everybody Counts: Music and Masterpieces event at The Everson Museum! Families of Pre-K, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students were invited to enjoy activity stations themed around art and music, intended to help build students' math skills!



SCSD Families Recognized at Inaugural Tony Awards



To close out the school year, Superintendent Davis hosted the inaugural Tony Awards – to honor the individuals and families who are making a positive impact in the SCSD community. Individuals from each SCSD school were chosen by their building leaders to be recognized at a ceremony at the Palace Theater.

Congratulations to Jeryanne Arroyo (Dr. Weeks), Daryl Williams, Jr. (Franklin), Erin Guilfoil (Grant), Nidia Castro (Henninger), Jaime & Louis Petrocci (Huntington), Deborah Service (Lincoln), Angela Miller (Montessori at LeMoyne), Mike & Jasmin Fink (Salem Hyde), Gerthy Davis (Webster), Amanda Brown (Brighton Academy), Amanda Hardee (Clary), Darlene Medley (Corcoran), Tim & Lisa Lambert (ELMS), Kristina Cooper (McKinley-Brighton), Rachel Cockrum (Meachem), Zona Williams (Roberts), Yomil Morales (STEAM at Dr. King), Willie & Nakisha Rogers (Van Duyn), Sarah Brown (Ed Smith), Adria Williams & Brian Wilson (HW Smith), Sharon Stevens (ITC), Shameka Rivers (McCarthy at Beard), Kenyon Black (Nottingham), Jeanette James (Oasis Academy), Christopher Paul (PFLA), Mary Mason (Syracuse Latin), Sierra McMahon (Bellevue), Sarah Parkhurst (Delaware), Frances Moses (Frazer), Galina Pechenaya (Porter), Joyce Figueroa (PSLA at Fowler), Ericka Rose (Seymour), and Terry Eckert (Syracuse STEM at Blodgett) – as well as District Family of the Year Mike Sun & Shang Chien!

ITC Senior Receives CNY STEM Scholarship



ITC senior **Ahmad Alawaad** was recently named a 2024 CNY STEM

Scholarship recipient. This scholarship program will offer him a \$2,000 per year college scholarship, summer internships at TTM Technologies, and then – upon his college graduation – a job interview with TTM Technologies! Ahmad has been pursuing the P-TECH Mechanical Technology program at ITC and will be attending Syracuse University next year to pursue Engineering.

Graduating Seniors Named Scholar Athletes



SCSD athletes representing each high school were honored at the Section 3 Scholar Athlete Awards at Onondaga Community College. Congratulations to **Khoudia Cisse** and **Jaylen Dixie-Wade** (ITC), **Lucy Lombard** and **James Saufley** (Nottingham), **Kenny Lanterman** and **Kente'Ja Carter** (Henninger), **Michael Thompson** and **Sophie Ranieri** (PSLA at Fowler), and **Dante Cox** and **Caroline Menon** (Corcoran)!

PK-8th Grade News

Webster Students Build Confidence and Make Waves with Free Swim Lessons



Avrielle Blank, a 4th grade student at **Webster**, has discovered a passion for swimming.

"We've been learning how to swim without kicking," she said proudly, pressing her palms together, arms extended over her head. "I'm hoping to join a swim team when I get older... but I'm not going to dive into 12 feet of water yet!"

Thanks to SCSD Head Swimming and Diving Coach **Ed Curle** and a team of part time and full time coaches, Webster 4th graders have enjoyed three weeks of swim lessons this fall and this spring. Through the lessons, students participate in three 45-minute American Red Cross swim classes.

"Our goal is ultimately to help get every 4th grade student into swimming," Coach Curle said. "We want them to get comfortable in the water, learn Red Cross swim skills, and for more advanced swimmers, learn how to improve their strokes. I'm really looking at this as a stepping stone. The kids can go home, talk about what they learned, and hopefully want to continue swimming from here! It's great for them to be exposed to the water at this age, to learn water safety, and to learn the swim basics."

Oasis Academy Scholars Write & Illustrate Book



Oasis Academy 2nd graders in **Mrs. Fogel's** and **Ms. Lex's** class recently worked with Library Media Specialist **Michele Suarez** to write and illustrate their own ABC Animals book. The

book was sent out for publication and will be on file as a hardcover book in the classroom moving forward!

Lincoln Staff Celebrate Inclusiveness with 'Pride Party'

In the SCSD, we strive to create an environment of acceptance and inclusion every day, all year long. At **Lincoln Middle School**, to wrap up Pride Month, Social Studies teacher **Alicia Whitmore** led a staff Pride Party! Staff played a game of Pride-themed Jeopardy, hosted by 8th grade student **Gabe Espinosa** – who is working to encourage schoolwide Pride celebrations next school year.



High School News

SCSD Students Inspired to Create Change, Thanks to 1st Amendment - 1st Vote Conference



Corcoran students are planning a reliable and accessible system to help girls obtain menstrual products at school. **Henninger** students are planning to create a schoolwide campaign to bring voice and awareness to the power of women's voices; and **Nottingham** students are promoting teen care – aiming to provide students with resources, contraceptives, hygiene products, and information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Through the 1st Amendment-1st Vote, Inc. conference, 11 girls representing Corcoran, Henninger, and Nottingham traveled to Auburn to get a non-partisan look at the democratic process, with the goal of enabling them to see themselves in elected office or other government-related positions.

Congratulations to Corcoran students **Shaima Osman** and **Yanina Wade**; Henninger students **Kaliya Delgado** and **Caitlin McNulty**; Nottingham students **Amina Jeilani**, **Atiya Haque**, **Reagan Winchell**, **Dahabo Abdirahim**, **Nyla Hardy**, **Meryam Saka**, **Tarteel Ali**, **Tahsin Islam**, **Fatma Mohamed**, and **Helen Zhe-Heimerman** (as well as members **Mia Leo**, **Mina Alsafi**, **Seineh Weah**, **Amirah Mohammad**, **Angelina Gomez**, **Abby Carello**, and **Molly Myers** – who were unable to attend the state conference); as well as advisors **Annie Smith**, **Heather Moses**, **Noelle Files**, and **Emma Smith**.

PSLA Students Win Participatory Budgeting Contest



This spring, students from all SCSD high schools submitted proposals for how they'd like to improve their school cafeteria space – thanks to a Participatory Budgeting activity led by the SCSD Office of Food and Nutrition Services. Their proposals were evaluated

by both a rubric and a panel of volunteering community partners – who selected the final three projects. All SCSD high school students were invited to vote for the winning project... with the **PSLA** proposal winning by a landslide, receiving 330 of the 838 student votes received!

The group suggested a PSLA Lunch Lounge – with comfortable seating, nice décor, and a lounge feel. As the winning project, the SCSD team is already working to bring it to life – looking into comfortable seating options and murals that will warm up the space. The cafeteria should be updated for the upcoming school year! Congratulations to students **Imani Martin**, **Samuel Alvarez**, **Anthony Rivera**, **ZaKaria Noor**, **Jihad Bolds**, **Connor Lehman**, and **Naim Anderson**.

Sparks of Creativity: Corcoran Welding Projects Showcase Student Talent

When the **Corcoran High School** welding shop opened in 2019, instructor **Jose Ocasio** knew he wanted to offer students a special final assignment. That year, and each year since, he has asked students to come up with a final project that would show their welding skills while also making a positive impact on their school community – or beyond.

This year, Corcoran welding students planned three major year-end projects: a memorial bench to honor the son of a school staff member who passed away in a tragic accident; a stenciled sign for the school's newly redesigned weight room; and a sculpture of student work, designed to represent the progression of students' skills through the welding Career and Technical Education (CTE) program.

"My goal is for the students to work together as a team toward a common goal," Mr. Ocasio explained. "I want our students to enjoy community service and feel a sense of pride in their community. Until we change how we see our school and our community, we can't change other people's views!"



SCSD Students Celebrate Hispanic Heritage



SCSD Students Celebrate Hispanic Heritage at Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute

Thanks to the Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute, nine SCSD students representing **Corcoran**, **Nottingham**, and **PSLA at Fowler** had the opportunity to learn about the legislative process in New York State, develop their leadership skills, learn about responsible civic engagement, and connect with their Latino roots.

“This opportunity really appealed to me because it was Hispanic-based,” Corcoran junior **Janzel Santa** shared. “I never really dive into anything at school that honors my heritage. It was really nice... I made a lot of strong bonds.”

Janzel was elected to represent the SCSD in Albany, where he toured Union College, met the people who created the PRHYLI program, toured the State Capitol Building, and then headed to the Assembly floor, where he participated in a mock debate about three pieces of legislation.

We’re proud of the students who participated in this opportunity to become **#SCSDCivicReady**: Corcoran students **Bel Lianis Carrasquillo**, **Janzel Santa**, and **Ruth Coriano**; Nottingham students **Kelly Carriel**, **Michel Triana**, **Pavel Rojas Delgado**, **Patricia Rodriguez Reyes**, and **Yareliz Diaz Fernandez**; and PSLA at Fowler student **Maria Ortiz**.



Check out our YouTube page, where families can view videos of some of our CTE programs and hear directly from the students participating in them!

CTE Corner

Henninger Health Professions Scholars Inspire Webster Students



It’s wonderful to see our **#SCSDCareerReady** high school students inspiring younger students. Henninger juniors in their school’s Health Professions Career and Technical Education pathways recently hosted 5th graders from Webster Elementary, planning activities to expose them to early CTE practices and pique their interest in a possible career in the healthcare field!

To learn more about the various CTE programs available in the SCSD, as well as the career readiness programming available at all grade levels, please visit www.syracusecityschools.com/cte/!

CTE Students Earn Professional Certifications

We’re proud of the CTE students who have worked hard to earn industry certifications in their areas of study – including:

- PSLA Cosmetology seniors **Alaisha De la Cruz-Robles**, **Alecia Grady**, **Da-Veila Lyons**, **Puja Munger**, and **Niyoguenga Prisca**. These students have earned their NYS Temporary



Cosmetology License. This means they are certified to work in a salon for six months while they take and pass their cosmetology State boards – which will provide them with a permanent license in cosmetology!

- PSLA Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) students **Jason Vo**, **Baraka Enock**, **Chase Coots**, **Jenny Vo**, **Paw Eh Blut Say**, **Ahmel Nelson**, and **Andrew Wolanske** passed their Part 107 exam, officially becoming FAA commercially certified drone pilots!



- PSLA Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) seniors **Muneera Adam**, **Michael Thompson**, and **Khadra Habseme** took and passed the NYS EMT test this school year – making them officially eligible to work as EMTs in New York State!



- **Henninger** Health Careers Academy students **Akeela Campbell**, **Hamdi Rashid**, and **Shantel Cave** have achieved a national phlebotomy certification, enabling them to be hired in the healthcare field upon completion of the school year. Catherine Bravo Cespedes earned the phlebotomy certification, as well as a medical assisting certification and a technical endorsement; Jesus Moreno III earned a technical endorsement and medical assisting certification; and Aniah Grant and Shameria Gunn earned a technical endorsement.



Alumni Spotlight

NAME: Dorsey Levens

SCSD SCHOOLS ATTENDED (AND GRADUATION YEAR): Nottingham '89

COLLEGE AND MAJOR(S): Notre Dame, Georgia Tech

CAREER PATH: I was selected by Green Bay in the 1994 NFL Draft. Through my NFL career, I also played for the Philadelphia Eagles and the New York Giants. I played in three SuperBowls, winning Super Bowl XXXI, and I was elected to the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame in 2009. It's been an amazing journey – one I dreamed about as a young man. Everything I went through made me stronger and propelled me on the right path.

I'M PROUD TO BE A SCSD GRADUATE BECAUSE... of the friends I made. The friends I grew up with are lifelong friends and I still hang out with them today.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR SCSD STUDENTS... It sounds cliché, but follow your dreams. You have to have a plan, and then you have to take action. Keep your focus on what you want to accomplish. Avoid the million and one distractions and the things that don't matter and that don't help you move forward. Focus on your dream nonstop. Focus on what's important to you.

Muslim Students Advocate for Seamless Inclusion in SCSD Schools



In the Muslim faith, followers are taught to observe salat – prayer – five times each day. One of those prayers falls during the school day. For some students, navigating the process during their school day was a challenge.

During Ramadan, Muslims typically abstain from all food

and drink from dawn to sunset. That meant challenges for some students when it came time to run around in gym class. Some Muslims abstain from music during Ramadan as well – which led to challenges in music classes, too.

Through her job as an English as a New Language (ENL) Home-School Relations Specialist, Heba Mohamed works to advocate for all students – ensuring that their culture, religion, and more are recognized and respected in the school setting. She also happens to be Muslim and speak Arabic – offering her a unique position to support the SCSD's large population of Muslim students. It is through this role that she is trying to bridge the gap between Muslim students and their teachers.

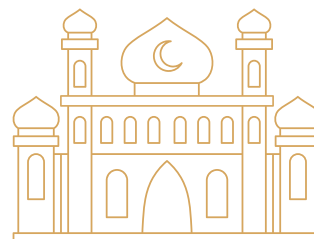
To make it easier for students to practice their religious rituals, PSLA at Fowler recently created a designated prayer room. Students may request a daily pass and are given a set amount of time each day to pray in the space.

"It's an honor to have a prayer room," senior Warda Issak shared. "Most schools don't have one. I'm really thankful! I think of prayer as part of my religion, but also as a peaceful way to guide me in life. The school is respectful in giving us time and our own space.

At Nottingham, students have taken their advocacy to another level – starting the Muslim Student Association back up this year.

Nottingham sophomore Rudayna Thabet serves as secretary of the school's Muslim Student Association.

"Having a Muslim Student Association at Nottingham is a game changer!" Rudayna shared. "It definitely makes me feel more included with the people around me, as well as the community. I can speak for many others in saying that it makes us feel like our culture is heard and valued."



Valedictorians & Salutatorians

Henninger High School

VALEDICTORIAN David Nguyen

Northeastern University, Health Science on a pre-med track



What was your proudest moment in high school? My proudest moment was being announced as Valedictorian. It

showed that all my hard work paid off. It means a lot because my family didn't have the same privileges for pursuing a high school education and beyond.

SALUTATORIAN Cassandra Brinley

Onondaga Community College, P-TECH health Professions



What has been the best part of your high school career and why? The best part of high school was when we had parties in our Health Professions program!

We'd dance and laugh – it was so fun to bond with our teachers and our classmates in the program.

Nottingham High School

VALEDICTORIAN Lucy Lombard

Syracuse University, Psychology on a Pre-Med track



What are you most looking forward to about college? I'm most looking forward to the independence, meeting new people, joining new clubs, securing internships,

and being in a new environment. I'm also happy I'll be near home so I can go home to have my mom do my laundry or make a home-cooked meal!

SALUTATORIAN James Saufley

Cornell University, Pre-Med



What's the best thing you've learned over the course of your time in the SCSD? I've learned that it's

important to be challenged and push yourself to do well in school; and also that it's important to have a life you enjoy socially and to be involved in things you like. I've also learned that the people at Nottingham – the staff and administration – really care about us. They've really built us up.

Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central

VALEDICTORIAN Miranda Azemi



Cornell, Biological Science

What advice would you give to other students as they continue their studies here?

Surround yourself with people who will better you. Don't settle for what's fun but do what will set you up for success!

SALUTATORIAN Angelina Grevi

Syracuse University, Broadcast Journalism or Visual Communication



What is something major you hope to achieve in life?

It's easy to say you want your name to be recognizable – but it's not easy to get there! I want to be a prominent media figure, like Mike Tirico or Michael Kay – but I want to do that and still be seen as Angie – as myself.

Corcoran High School

VALEDICTORIAN Caroline Menon



SUNY Geneseo, Sociomedical Science

What has been the best part of your high school career and why? I came to the SCSD in my

sophomore year. Coming in from out of the district, the best part for me was really becoming fully involved in the SCSD community and being able to contribute city-wide. Through Mock Trial, which is a combined team, we've really worked together to become one big family representing our district!

SALUTATORIAN Maria Gonzalez Garcia

Cornell University, Biochemistry



What's the best thing you've learned over the course of your time in the SCSD? The best thing I've learned over the course of my time in

the SCSD is that you can genuinely ask for help, and you should ask for help. I've never been the kind of person to like or feel comfortable doing that, but the SCSD has teachers and other staff members who genuinely care and want to support you, and those resources are both valuable and necessary.

PSLA at Fowler

VALEDICTORIAN Maria Mohamed

Syracuse University, Engineering or Math



What has been the best part of your high school career and why? Now! I'm finally done. Everything I've worked for all these years is finally happening, and I've made great memories along the way.

SALUTATORIAN Timothy Sass, Jr.

Syracuse University, TV, Radio, and Film



What advice would you give to other students as they continue their studies here? School isn't everything. Make connections.

Network. Find out what you want to do with your life. That is ultimately more important. The high school diploma is valuable – but in order to have a happy life, you have to do something that makes you happy.



You can read the full valedictorian and salutatorian interviews by scanning this QR code.



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To build, support and sustain school communities that provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them to graduate as responsible, active citizens ready for success in college and careers and prepared to compete in a global economy.

VISION

To prepare and inspire all of our students to innovate locally and contribute globally.

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The Syracuse City School District hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it is committed to providing equal access to all categories of employment, programs and educational opportunities, including career and technical education opportunities, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, Native American ancestry/ethnicity, creed or religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender identity or expression, disability or any other legally protected category under federal, state or local law.

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>> Share your questions, comments or concerns 24/7 using the Let's Talk tool at www.syracusecityschools.com



Say Yes Scholar Spotlight Aarick Knighton

As Say Yes celebrates its 15th Anniversary this year, alumni are reflecting on how the program has helped shape their lives.

Aarick Knighton, a 2011 alumnus of Corcoran High School, is one of more than 6,000 Say Yes scholarship recipients. Aarick embodies the community spirit that the program aims to spark in prospective scholars. Growing up on the city's Southside, Aarick was actively involved at a young age, whether it was performing in church plays, volunteering for a Juneteenth committee, or participating in Valley sports. Say Yes propelled him to study information management and technology at Syracuse University, which equipped this lifelong learner with the skills to work as a social media manager for Syracuse.com and Syracuse University, before serving as Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh's campaign manager ahead of the mayor's second term.

Currently, Aarick is the social media editor in SUNY Upstate Medical University's Public Relations office. Aarick has likened his Say Yes scholarship to being "the keys" that helped him start the ignition to build on the civic responsibility his family instilled in him. He keeps in touch with fellow Say Yes classmates, and participated in a reunion to celebrate their 10th Anniversary of graduating in 2021.

Say Yes is celebrating 15 Years of Impact!



Did you Know?

Since 2009, Say Yes has **awarded nearly \$15 million in scholarships** to more than 6000 scholars.

Say Yes partners with **hundreds of colleges and universities** in the U.S. including SUNYs, CUNYs, HBCUs and HSI's.

Only 43% of the class of 2023 applied for scholarships, leaving money on the table and dreams unrealized.

It's never too soon to plan for tomorrow! Learn how Say Yes can help make your college dreams a reality, and sign up for the newsletter by visiting SayYesSyracuse.org

Text SAYYES to 315-562-7154 to receive updates and information