

# Monroe Public Schools Community Newsletter

John Battista, Interim Superintendent of Schools

September 2017



In a letter to the school community, I expressed my honor and pleasure to be able to serve as the Interim Superintendent of the Monroe Public Schools. I have been a member of the Staff in Monroe for the last 34 years as a teacher, Principal, Assistant Superintendent, and now as the Interim Superintendent. I find the Monroe School Community a wonderful place to educate children, and I have been blessed to be here throughout my career.

Over the last five years, I have been a proud member of the leadership team, seeing tremendous success and receiving accolades because of the dedicated staff and the accomplishments of our students. Masuk is a Blue Ribbon School and

Jockey Hollow and the Elementary Schools are Schools of Distinction. My goal this year is to continue the momentum that we started five years ago with the positive changes in curriculum, professional development, school safety, facility upkeep, and fiscal transparency. Working with town officials, parents, and students, we will continue to have a school system of which we can all be proud.

Communication has been, and will continue to be, a goal for our school system. From the classroom bulletins and newsletters, to the District Facebook Page and the school ListServ announcements, we strive to better communicate with our community. This year, we are instituting two new ways of communicating. The first is the Superintendent Twitter account. @MonroeSuper will be used to send out short messages that will keep our community fur-

ther informed. Please follow us @MonroeSuper on Twitter. Also, Steve Vavrek and I will be hosting a Saturday Morning Conversation, one Saturday per month, at the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library/Rotary Room, for any interested community member who would like to “chat” with us in an informal setting. It is my hope that the more ways we can communicate with our community the more you will see what this school district has to offer your children and your town.

On behalf of all of us in the Monroe Schools, I want to welcome you to another school year and wish you and your children great happiness and success.

*John Battista*

Twitter: @MonroeSuper



MONROE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
— MONROE, CONNECTICUT —

## Monroe Public Schools Upcoming Dates to Note

### September 13

Masuk's Back-to-School Night  
7:00 PM

Masuk Early Dismissal

### September 14

Elementary Back-to-School  
Nights, Gr. 3-5, 7:00 PM

### September 21

Rosh Hashanah ~ No School

### November 7

Teacher PD/Election Day  
No School

### November 9 & 14

Masuk Parent Conferences  
Masuk Early Dismissal

### November 22-24

Thanksgiving Recess

### November 28

Elementary Conference Night

### November 30

Elementary Conferences  
Elementary Early Dismissal

### December 4

Elementary Conference Night

### December 7

Grade 8 Masuk Open House  
7:00 PM

Masuk Early Dismissal

### December 22

District Wide Early Dismissal

### December 25-January 1

Winter Recess

Visit Monroe Public Schools Website

## FBLA Spring State Leadership Conference

Masuk FBLA recently attended the FBLA State Leadership Conference in Cromwell, CT. Members, along with advisor, Lynn Costello, attended and engaged in several workshops throughout the day. These workshops centered around business concepts and topics such as job interviews and entrepreneurship. At the end of the day, several Masuk FBLA members received awards.

The award recipients were:

- Wen Jay Lim (Agribusiness - 1<sup>st</sup> Place)
- Sarah Gruber (Who's Who in FBLA)
- Mackenzie Metro, Gabriela Sardinha, and Sarah Gruber (Community Service Project – 1<sup>st</sup> Place)
- Diana Wallet and Allie Lichvar (Entrepreneurship – 1<sup>st</sup> Place)
- Michele Rajpolt and Carolina Sardinha (Sports and Entertainment Management – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place)
- Amanda Dial (Personal Finance – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place)
- Jayden Wieser (Journalism – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place)

Members who also attended the conference were: Amaan Ashab, Ashley Acerbo, Daniel Fagan, Caitlyn Gruber, Zach Hernandez, Nisha Honnaya, Matthew Hurley, Kyle Immel, Michael Klages, Lucia Laudato, Zayne Lawrence, Emma Palomba, Roberto Perez, Daniel Rodrigues, and Mikaleah Teixeira.

The Masuk Chapter of The Future Business Leaders of America is the largest chapter in the state of Connecticut with over 100 members yearly. All students grades 9-12 are encouraged to join this active organization. Meetings are held monthly and numerous community service projects, activities, and conferences are available to participants. For more information on FBLA, please contact Lynn Costello, Advisor, at [lcostello@monroeps.org](mailto:lcostello@monroeps.org)



## Computational Fluency

Nothing may be more feared in the minds of young children and their parents than learning the basic math facts. Just hearing the times tables takes many of us back to our own childhoods, staring at a blank page and trying to remember the dreaded  $9 \times 8 = 72$ . The good news is that our own children should not have to suffer the same fear.

A substantial amount of mathematics education research shows that children do not master their math facts through memorization alone. Instead, true mastery comes from being equipped with quick and effective strategies for finding the solution. By using these strategies, children will always have the mental tools needed to find the correct answer and the confidence to use them. With a strategy-based approach to the basic math facts, children use what they already know to figure out what they don't know. Rather than racking their brains to remember the answer to a basic math fact, they can simply find a "helping" fact and use it as a jumping-off point. For example, let's say that your child knows the common fact  $5 \times 5 = 25$ . She can then add one more group of 5 to figure out that  $6 \times 5 = 30$ . Think of this as the "one more than" strategy. There are many such strategies that parents can teach their children in order to equip them with the tools they need to master all of their math facts. As a

parent, remember that as long as your child can figure out an answer quickly in her head, she has mastered the fact and can use it in meaningful ways as part of her daily life.

This year, our focus for students in Grades K-5 will be to strengthen Computational Fluency. You will find Computational Fluency strategy brochures on the District's K-5 Math Department website ([http://www.monroeps.org/pages/monroeps/Departments/K-5\\_Math](http://www.monroeps.org/pages/monroeps/Departments/K-5_Math)). These grade-specific strategies are being taught in all grades, whether through direct instruction or during daily Number Talks. The brochures are conveniently broken down for you by grade level.



## American Statistical Association Poster Competition - Connecticut Chapter

Last April, we experienced a very exciting day for many Monroe students! It was the day of the American Statistical Association's Poster Competition Award Ceremony held at UCONN. Numerous students representing all three elementary schools participated in this annual competition.

The following students and teachers were winners: Fawn Hollow-Joe Douglass (Mrs. Minor/Mrs. Cusa) won Second Place for his poster entitled "Trust"; Samantha Tristine and Claire Valle (Mr. Husvar) won Third Place for their poster entitled "What's Your Favorite Emoji?" Monroe Elementary-Tyler Barringer (Mrs. Dixon/Mrs. Ross) won Honorable Mention for his poster entitled "Lots of People, Lots of

Height. Do They Match?" Stepney Elementary- Aiden Pimpinella (Miss Bengtson) and Connor Fulchino (Mrs. Cushing) won Honorable Mention for their poster entitled "Would You Rather Play Video Games and Watch TV or Go Outside and Play?"; Ellie DeGeorge and Ashley Colberg (Mrs. Parmalee) won Honorable Mention for their poster, "Where Did Your Money Go?". Stepney students worked on their posters under the direction of Mrs. Colberg.

Winning posters can be viewed at: <http://ww2.amstat.org/chapters/Connecticut/>



Congratulations to Monroe Students!  
(pictured Claire Valle, Ellie DeGeorge,  
Aiden Pimpinella,  
Ashley Colberg, Samantha Tristine)

## Monroe Passport Club

The Monroe Public Schools is pleased to offer Monroe Senior Citizens the opportunity to attend sporting events, musical concerts, and theatre production in our schools at no cost.

**Monroe's Passport Club** entitles the bearer to  
free admission to school events.

This pass is good for regular season games. This pass is  
not good for Thanksgiving Day and tournament games.

Please call ahead to check for availability of events.

To join, please send your name and address to:

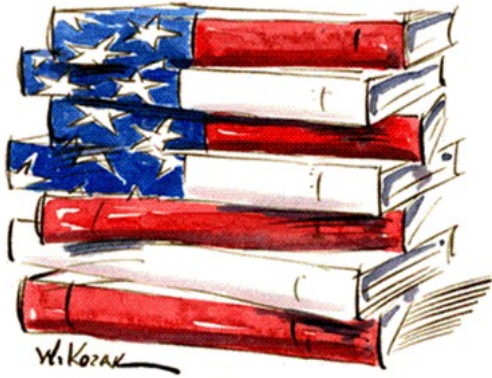
Monroe BOE  
375 Monroe Turnpike  
Monroe, CT 06468  
Attention: L. Crespo

or

email information to: [lcrespo@monroeps.org](mailto:lcrespo@monroeps.org)



## American Studies Course Combines U.S. History, Literature, and Technology



This year, some juniors at Masuk High School will be taking a unique course blending the study of U.S. History and American Literature. The course is called American Studies and is taught over two class periods, with two teachers, earning students credit in both English and History.

The course began several years ago when students commented to their

teachers that they were often discussing similar topics in both classes. "I remember teaching students about poetry of the Harlem Renaissance and discussing novels of the Lost Generation as a way to understand the social and political climate of the 1920s. Students were telling me that they had read many of these in their American Literature class. It occurred to me that the only

place we separate history from the literature of the era is in schools. We needed to find a way to bring them together," said Ian Lowell, Instructional Leader of History/Social Studies. The new course was created in partnership with Michael Crowley, Instructional Leader of English, and teachers from both departments.

The class will also be bringing in another important element this year-- a one-to-one student computer pro-

gram. All students in the class will be issued a Google Chromebook. Student research, organization, and much of their reading and writing will be completed on this device. In addition, students will be able to use the device throughout their school day beyond the American Studies class. This pilot program is designed to determine the academic benefits of a one-to-one program. An education grant is funding the entire cost of the Chromebook purchase.



## The Healthy Habit of Reading

Throughout our students' lives in the Monroe Public Schools, they will be asked to read countless pages of text. These assignments will come in all their classes and will allow them to learn innumerable things about the world in which they live. Another important facet of the learning experience is independent, personal choice reading - a habit that will have implications to students long after they leave the halls of our schools.

Recently, many studies have shown that adults who read regularly see positive implications in their own physical and emotional health. The journal *Neurology* conducted a study

that showed that frequent reading will slow the decline in memory and brain function that naturally comes from aging. Why talk about this now, in regards to our youthful population in the Monroe Schools? Well, the habits of reading are built in the school years and students' positive experiences with books now will have a better chance of leading to consistent readers as adults.

Our elementary schools have embraced the Columbia Teachers College Reader's Workshop Model and have witnessed a huge increase in student reading. This summer, the middle school purchased hundreds of books from Linda's Story Time to

support this effort. Using a Book Club model, students will have access to some of the most engaging current novels for young people. Many high school English teachers have implemented time for students to read independent books -- short periods to focus on reading of their choice, supplementing their learning with topics and issues that fascinate them.

As we head into the school year, please take the opportunity to talk to your children about what you're reading, and ask them questions concerning their own reading experience. The implications may move far beyond the academic.

## Hot Fun in the Summertime ~ Stepney Schools Gets a New Roof



Having experienced the summer of 2016, which included the changing out of an oil tank in the front of the building, the Stepney School Staff believed they were prepared for this summer and the installation of a new roof. Perhaps they were wrong.

As you can see from some of the photos of the work shown above, it entirely took over the landscape of Stepney School. There were piles of insulation in the school parking lot which were close to thirty feet high. With hot tar machines, dumpsters, workmen, trucks, and dust everywhere. It was decided to move summer offices over to Central Office.

The work continued throughout all daylight hours and sometimes longer. The work was begun in the primary wing, moved to the main wing, and finally up to the intermediate wing and the gym.

Because the weather cooperated for the most part, the progress was smooth with the final touches on the upper hallway and the gym completed by the week of August 14. All of this occurred while the custodians and the summer help worked diligently to clean up the inside of the building while keeping their distance from the work going on outside.

In the midst of all this activity was the installation of new playground equipment. One new piece was added on each of the two playgrounds. The equipment was purchased by the Stepney PTO. Those pieces were ready for children on August 31.

As the calendar turned toward the end of August, the Stepney Staff made all of the final preparations as they eagerly awaited the students' return. When the students entered the school, they saw an entirely new school building in which to learn.

*The mission of the Monroe Public Schools is to ensure that all students reach their full potential as innovative thinkers and responsible citizens through a challenging, inquiry-based curriculum delivered by skilled, dedicated, and engaging educators.*

**For more information on the Monroe Public Schools, go to:**

**[www.monroeps.org](http://www.monroeps.org)**

## Fawn Hollow School Is Golden!

A half century has passed since Fawn Hollow first opened its doors, in September 1967, to elementary students in grades K through 5. Over those fifty years, more than 30,000 students have been educated within its walls. Wow - what an accomplishment for Monroe! What was Fawn Hollow like fifty years ago? This page from the 1967 Monroe Annual Report offers some insight to the opening of the newest school in town.

“Fawn Hollow School was substantially completed and opened with 691 pupils in grades K - 5. While strikes prevented completion of the school as originally scheduled, only minor items remained to be finished.

The school is anticipated to be completed within its allotted building budget of \$900,000. The facilities include 25 classrooms, 3 kindergarten rooms, library, multi-purpose room, kitchen and administrative area as called for in the educational specifications. As compared to the averages of the other elementary schools being constructed in the state during this period, Fawn Hollow had a construction cost of \$687.53 per pupil capacity while the average construction cost was \$1,014.02 but only 50 sq. ft per pupil capacity as opposed to the average of 59 sq. ft.

The firm of Fletcher-Thompson, Inc. was the architect and supervised the construction with The Monaco Construction Company being the main contractor. The Committee is extremely pleased with the results of their efforts and thankful

for the cooperation and help it has received from the town and school boards and officials, especially Mr. A. Vertucci, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. D. Maloney, Principal.

Fawn Hollow School building committee members: Kurt B. Hersher, Ernest M. Junkins, Chairman, Carl W. Pearson, Secretary, Kenneth Strobel and Emil J. Trampusch

Pride in a job well done is evident in this short report. Subsequent Annual Reports display the same pride in the curriculum and instruction work undertaken by the district.

A perusal of scrapbooks of newspaper clippings compiled by reporter Jean Loveland netted additional interesting information. The cafeteria opened later in the year (maybe due to the strike?) so students had to bring lunch. When finally available, school lunch was 40¢ (\$2.90 this year). In 1987 an additional ten classrooms and a gymnasium were added to the original building.”



Members of the Fawn Hollow School community are making plans to celebrate the school’s Golden Anniversary over the course of the school year. The Fawn Hollow PTO will soon be extending an invitation to the community to attend a Dinner/Auction Evening scheduled for November 4 at The Stone Barn in Monroe. Persons interested in attending this special event will find more information on the PTO website, accessible through [monroeps.org](http://monroeps.org). The year promises to be one filled with history and fun.”

Historical information pertaining to Fawn Hollow or regarding notable individuals who attended Fawn Hollow is welcomed and may be delivered to our main office or emailed to [fhoffice@monroeps.org](mailto:fhoffice@monroeps.org).

*Many thanks to Gail Wood, Edith Wheeler Memorial Library, and Marvin Moss,, Monroe Historical Society, for their assistance in locating historical information.*

# Jockey Hollow Coffee with the Principal

The ongoing *Coffee with the Principal* program, at Jockey Hollow School, offers parents an opportunity to connect and speak directly with school administration. It offers a relaxed forum in which parents and school administration discuss various timely topics related their children’s education.

*Coffee with the Principal* is a series of information sessions followed by an opportunity to discuss, comment, and ask questions. The monthly meetings usually begin in October. There is typically a twenty to thirty minute presentation with time for questions, comments, and an open forum for school administration and parents to discuss any appropriate educational issues.

Jack Ceccolini began inviting parents to *Coffee with the Principal* as an administrator at Fawn Hollow School seventeen years ago. As principal of Jockey Hollow School, Mr. Ceccolini continues to offer and improve the program each year. *Coffee with the Principal* has developed into year-long series with topics

placed at points in the year at which they are most applicable. For example, each spring there is a session about course selection for the following year.

When asked about the program he offered, “Parents enjoy meeting over coffee and discussing topical issues at school. I quickly learned that offering a specific topic for discussion at each meeting raised greater interest among parents and increased attendance. I also discovered that inviting presenters or experts in the topic area really boosted the energy at the meetings.” Jack Ceccolini has improved the program over time by listening to feedback from participants.

Parents are notified of the meetings through a newsletter and an email. At the close of each meeting parents often suggest future topics of discussion. In fact, “The parents often determine the agendas for the upcoming meeting based on the conversations at an earlier *Coffee*,” said STEM Director, Leigh Ances.

Assistant Principal, Laura Maher, re-

counted, “Our meetings have contained a wide range of topics. We have had presentations on drugs and alcohol abuse, curriculum presentations on Math, Science, Language Arts and World Language instruction, as well as evenings devoted to technology and internet safety to name only a few subject areas.”

Plans are underway for meeting topics for *Coffee with the Principal* for the new school year. Transition to Middle School and High School will be on the schedule this year as well as curricular presentations that will include our approach to reading and writing instruction and the various sequences of math courses available to students from middle school through high school.

Hopefully, parents will find *Coffee with the Principal* another valuable opportunity to stay connected with the school and their child’s education.



# Monroe Fifth Graders Vote for 'Kid Governor'

Beginning in the fall of 2016 and coinciding with the Presidential Election, Monroe fifth graders joined in a vote all their own. They, along with other fifth grade students from around the state, voted for the Connecticut Kid Governor. Part of a national award winning civics program started in 2015 by the Connecticut Public Affairs Network (CPAN), the election happens each fall in the same week that adults go to the polls for elections.

The 'Kid Governor' candidates create a platform on which to run and a campaign video. These are collected at the state level and a panel decides on the top seven to go out to schools for the vote. Once elected, the Kid Governor is officially sworn in by the Secretary of State and takes part in several official meetings with legislators. The actual election of a Kid Governor is only the final phase of a full curriculum unit on the process and importance of voting in elections.

This past year was the first for Monroe students participating in the lessons and voting process. This coming fall, our fifth graders will have the chance to vote for a new 'Kid Governor' and we hope to offer our own candidate to compete in the statewide competition.

Welcome to the official website of  
**Connecticut's Kid Governor™**

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Congratulations to Jessica Brodksom of John F. Kennedy School in Milford for being elected as the 2017 Connecticut's Kid Governor!™

Watch CKG Jessica's latest video about how you can hold a collection drive in your own town to benefit your local pound or animal shelter!

CT-KidGovernor.org

Learn more about CKG Jessica's platform *Helping Animals, Those Without A Voice* HERE



## Seal of Biliteracy

The Department of World Languages is excited to announce that Monroe will offer its students the opportunity to earn the Seal of Biliteracy, available for the first time this year in Connecticut. The Connecticut legislature has passed the Seal of Biliteracy legislation and Governor Malloy signed it into law in May 2017.

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school district or state in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation (as stated on [sealofbiliteracy.org](http://sealofbiliteracy.org)). Connecticut joins twenty-four other states in making this recognition seal available to its students. World Languages



Instructional Leader Lisa Peterson served as a member of the State's Seal of Biliteracy workgroup last year and will continue to work to implement it in districts across Connecticut.

One way to demonstrate proficiency and earn the Seal is by taking all four components of the AAPPL assessment in grades 10, 11, or 12. Monroe students began to take the speaking component of the AAPPL assessment in 2014. According to last year's results from this one component, over 100 students have the potential to earn the seal by June!

More information will be provided during the school year. Please visit [sealofbiliteracy.org](http://sealofbiliteracy.org) if you would like more information about the seal and/or contact Lisa Peterson at [lpeterson@monroeps.org](mailto:lpeterson@monroeps.org) for information about implementation in Monroe.

## Focus on Guidance at Monroe Elementary

At Monroe Elementary School, our mission is to help students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally to prepare them for the challenges of middle school and beyond.

Our focus in the academic areas has evolved significantly as the curriculum has become more rigorous and



standardized. One element of our school has remained constant and that is the Developmental Guidance Curriculum.

The goal of the Developmental Guidance Curriculum is to reach all students through the classroom setting as a means to provide education in the area of life skills. Students receive instruction and have the opportunity to discuss the topics of self-esteem, friendship, feelings, communication, decision making, accepting differences, dealing with bullies, and time management. In fifth grade, the topics of Drug/Alcohol use and transition to middle school are also addressed.

The same topics are addressed each year, becoming more complex/detailed as the children progress through the grades. Lessons are 30-60 minutes in length, with the counselor visiting each classroom 7-10 times a year, depend-

ing on the grade level.

The Developmental Guidance Curriculum enables the counselor to have contact with all students, individually or in a small group, not just those students that require additional counseling services. In addition, students are given the same message about expected behavior. For example, children are taught the skills required for being respectful, understanding differences, and the qualities of friendship. Students gaining positive social skills helps us to build a positive school environment.

A positive school climate is the most important factor in any school's success. The Developmental Guidance Curriculum created and delivered by our counselors is a strong contributor to our positive social environment.



## New AP Computer Class Coming to Masuk

This fall, Masuk High School's CTE Department will debut a new Advanced Placement course - Computer Science Principles. With the addition of this class, Masuk will boast a total of 16 AP opportunities. Computer Science Principles is designed to tap into students' innovative skill-set by having them create their own applications for handheld devices. The College Board's intent in developing this class was to inspire students to consider a career path within the ever-expanding field of computer science. Masuk will be among a few select schools in Connecticut that offer this challenging course.

Veteran Masuk teacher Bill McDonough will be the instructor of this course. He is no stranger to the field of computers as he is currently teaching various classes in programming, video game design, engineering and robotics. This summer, McDonough received over one hundred hours of extensive training at

Southern Connecticut State University so that he could meet the College Board's standards to instruct Computer Science Principles. "This course promises to provide our students with a challenging curriculum," McDonough says. "It will require them to critique one-another, to think creatively, and demonstrate mastery of various computer related skills. I believe this new course provides a tremendous opportunity for 21st century learning."

Students enrolled in the new Computer Science Principles class will be programming on Android tablets using the M.I.T. App Inventor software. Throughout the 2017-2018 school year, students will develop numerous apps that can be used in the real world. In fact, McDonough says that the apps developed by the students in this class may even become available for purchase in the Google App store. One example of an app developed in this class at another

school allows a person to anonymously report gang activity to authorities. Another app allows the user to track requirements for Boy Scout merit badges. "The possibilities are endless," McDonough says.

Monroe's Assistant Superintendent Jack Zmary looks forward to the installation of this course. Dr. Zmary sees this as another great opportunity to prepare Masuk students for college and careers. AP Computer Science Principles will provide students with an ideal combination of content that is highly engaging for students while also being very relevant.



## Elementary Science

Students in elementary grades will learn about the Engineering Design Process this year. Engineering in elementary levels sounds very new to most of us. We are more familiar with using the Scientific Method of Inquiry to investigate questions in science classes. With guidance from the Next Generation Science Standards, we are diving deeper into the work of scientists and engineers. This set of standards helps us understand that science goes beyond investigation and puts science knowledge to work, designing solutions to problems in our world. This is known as the Engineering Design Process.

Some of our teachers and students piloted this work last year with much success. Students proposed problems they experienced, applied science knowledge, designed a solution on paper, shared the plan with others for feedback, and then revised the idea or made suggestions for further research. Our budding engineers presented solutions that use magnets to prevent water bottles from falling off desks to solutions that address erosion in the school garden. Students demonstrated creativity and collaboration throughout the process but more importantly showed that elementary students can indeed think like engineers. We look forward to more days of design this year.



## Masuk High School College Acceptances 2017

Anna Maria College	Indiana University at Bloomington	Pennsylvania State University	University of California, Los Angeles
Arizona State University	Ithaca College	Pennsylvania State Univ, Altoona	University of Colorado at Boulder
Assumption College	James Madison University	Plymouth State University	University of Connecticut
Becker College	Juniata College	Providence College	University of Connecticut at Stamford
Bentley University	Keene State College	Quinnipiac University	University of Delaware
Boston University	King's College	Radford University	University of Hartford
Brandeis University	Las Positas College	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Maine
Bucknell University	Lehigh University	Rivier University	University of Maryland, College Park
California Institute of the Arts	Lincoln Technical Institute	Robert Morris University	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Canisius College	Loyola University Maryland	Roger Williams University	University of Miami
Carnegie Mellon University	Manhattanville College	Sacred Heart University	University of Michigan
Central Connecticut State Univ	Marist College	Saint Joseph's University	University of New Hampshire, Durham
Clemson University	Marywood University	Saint Michael's College	University of New Haven
Cornell University	McGill University	Salve Regina University	University of Rhode Island
Duke University	Messiah College	San Diego State University	University of South Carolina
East Carolina University	Missouri Univ of Science & Tech	Skidmore College	University of South Carolina, Beaufort
Eastern Connecticut State Univ	Mount Ida College	Southern Connecticut State Univ	University of Utah
Elon University	Mount Saint Mary College	Springfield College	University of Utah
Fairfield University	Naugatuck Valley Comm College	Stonehill College	Vassar College
Felician University	New England Institute of Tech	Suffolk University	Virginia Tech
Florida Atlantic University	Nichols College	The College of New Jersey	Wentworth Institute of Technology
Florida Gulf Coast University	Northeastern University	The University of Alabama	West Virginia University
Fordham University	Northwestern University	The University of Scranton	Western Connecticut State University
Franklin Pierce University	Norwalk Community College	The University of the Arts	Western New England University
Georgetown University	Ohio University	Towson University	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Gordon College	Oklahoma City University	Tufts University	<b>Military Commitments</b>
Hillsong College Australia	Pace University, New York City	University of Bridgeport	Army
Hofstra University	Palm Beach Atlantic University	University of California, Berkeley	Air Force
Housatonic Community College	Pennsylvania College of Tech	University of California, Irvine	Marines

The overwhelming majority of Masuk students continue to pursue post-secondary education in the form of two and four year colleges and vocational training.

- 82% of the graduating class of 2017 will pursue a bachelors degree at a four year institution.
- 9% will attend a vocational or two year school.
- 28 Masuk graduates (9.7% of the class) earned 43 acceptances into the “most competitive” four year colleges in the country.
- 104 students (36% of the class) earned 217 acceptances into the next tier of “highly competitive” colleges. These rankings are based on Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges.



## Monroe Music - New Faces, New Places

This was a busy summer for the music department! Some music faculty have taken new positions within the District, and two new teachers have come on board. Rich conversations about curriculum and student performance have energized us and left Monroe Music ready for a fantastic 2017-18. Here is an overview of the new roles and new teachers you will see this year:

**Fawn Hollow Music:** With the retirement of Mr. Brad Peterson, Fawn Hollow has the opportunity to welcome veteran music teacher **Ms. Mary Hajj-Platt** to Room 19. Ms. Hajj-Platt has previously taught fifth grade band and Kindergarten music at Fawn Hollow, and she has some exciting plans for all grades this year!

**Grade 5 Band at Fawn Hollow/ Stepney:** Focusing on the foundation of instrumental music, you will see **Ms. Amy Grasso** take up the baton for both schools. Ms. Grasso brings her expertise as Masuk High School band director all the way to grade 5, where she will be leading sectional lessons as well as ensemble rehearsals. You'll also see her in the general music classroom at Jockey Hollow!

**Masuk Band / STEM Band:** With Ms. Grasso's move to the middle grades, Masuk welcomes **Mr. Michael Ances** to the high school/ STEM combined position. Already an experienced band director, he will now also be reaching back to his college days to draw on experience as drum major for UConn's marching band. Mr. Ances will also be seen in the STEM general music classroom.

**Jockey Hollow Band and Strings/ Fawn Hollow Grade 5 Strings:** With Mr. Ances taking on the band position, new to the district is **Mr. Robert Beehler**, who comes to us from a flourishing middle school band program in North Carolina. Mr. Beehler will be collaborating with both Mr. Ances and Ms. Homann to keep JH Main Campus and STEM band and strings making beautiful music together.

**Jockey Hollow Chorus/ STEM Chorus:** This summer we bade farewell to Mr. Martone, as he became choir teacher at Branford High School. Taking over this successful program is **Ms. Amanda Morrison**. Any Stepney grads will already know of Ms. Morrison's love of choral music performance, as many Stepney Elementary "Spectaculars" have displayed!

**Stepney Music and Grade 5 Strings:** Taking the helm at Stepney will be **Ms. Alexandra Oakley**, a recent graduate of the excellent music program at Western CT State University. Ms. Oakley student taught in Newtown and was highly recommended.

## Tips & Resources for Math Students

Students may occasionally find a math concept confusing, difficult to understand, or may just want extra practice to feel comfortable with a given skill. Fortunately, there are many sources of support and extra help. Below are a few tips and online resource suggestions:

**Ask questions in class.** The teacher is a student's primary resource. Asking a question is actually great feedback for the teacher and enables them to review certain topics before moving on to another skill, concept, or application. If a student does not know what to ask in the class or is not comfortable asking questions, encourage him or her to see the teacher before or after class.

**Take advantage of extra help.** Every teacher has extra help hours after school to meet with students in a smaller group setting to review concepts taught in class. The teachers are able to give your child more one to one attention as well as additional problems to help them understand the mathematics.

**Schedule time in math lab.** (Jockey Hollow School and Masuk High School) It is staffed most periods by a math specialist who can answer any last minute questions before exams or questions on homework or class work. Many students are scheduled into the Math Lab for extra support in their mathematics class.

**Use email.** There are times when a student may have a math question while at home and does not have access to the teacher. The student can email the teacher with any questions. The teacher might not respond that night but will see your child's email and can address the question in the next class.

**Use online resources.** For the middle school, the Big Ideas Website (<https://www.bigideasmath.com>) is an excellent complement to the mathematics textbook used in many of the classes. It has videos and tutorials to help explain the concepts taught in class.

Another website is IXL (<https://www.ixl.com>). Many middle school students are using IXL in the classroom to strengthen math skills and identify weaknesses. Their teacher is able to see the student's data and address any difficulties they observe.

At the high school, many students use Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>) to help support them in the classroom as well as prepare for AP Math classes and SATs. Khan Academy provides YouTube mathematics videos, practice exercises and teacher materials. All of these mathematics resources are free to use. These extra help suggestions have brought success to many math students in the past and are a good guide for receiving the support needed in the math class.

For questions about additional math help, please contact the Mathematics Instructional Leader Kevin Welch at [kwelch@monroeps.org](mailto:kwelch@monroeps.org).

# Saturday Morning Conversations!



First Selectman, Steve Vavrek, and Superintendent, John Battista, will be available at the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library Rotary Room one Saturday morning per month to talk with any Monroe Citizen.

Please come to the EWML to chat with us on the following dates from 10:00 AM—12:00 Noon  
Saturday, September 9, 2017 \*\*\* Saturday, October 14, 2017 \*\*\*\* Saturday, November 11, 2017  
Saturday, January 20, 2018 \*\*\*\* Saturday, February 10, 2018 \*\*\*\* Saturday, March 10, 2018  
Saturday, April 28, 2018 \*\*\*\* Saturday, May 12, 2018

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**GOING FORWARD,  
NEWSLETTERS WILL BE SHARED VIA  
WWW.MONROEPS.ORG,  
FACEBOOK, AND TWITTER.  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PRINT COPY,  
PLEASE CALL  
203-452-2860.**