



Fonda-Fultonville CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

International club brings worldwide connections to FFCS students

With today's advancement in technology, students are learning and sharing information faster and more efficiently than ever before. Students continue to gain access to information and data to make connections in an ever-changing world. Those opportunities continue to evolve and reshape our thoughts and perceptions of citizens, and their communities on a global scale.

At FFCS, the high school continues to deliver opportunities for students to interact with their peers from countries ranging from South Korea to Croatia to Germany and Vietnam, all from the comfort of their laptops.

"Our students are gaining opportunities to learn about countries from their peers

across the globe," said Fonda-Fultonville Social Studies Teacher Mr. Thompson. "It's truly remarkable to see them creating friendships while learning how students from across multiple countries perceive not only events but day-to-day issues as teenagers. Normal topics are shared as they have conversations about music, movies, and how their schools differ from one another."

The International Club is advised by Mr. Thompson and FFCS Technology Specialist Mrs. Hinrichs. The program is a way to expand students' ability to repurpose what



they are learning in the classroom and make connections with students from each corner of the world. Students are finding that, despite some language and cultural differences, the similarities are very profound.

between students by creating opportunities to share information and thoughts on popular culture and news. It's delivering something larger than a one-time Google Meet and is increasing learning opportunities moving forward. As the club continues through the school year, students have scheduled upcoming meetings with their global peers in Poland, Vietnam, and Jordan.

Learning about new cultures always creates opportunities to expand the classroom experience. From learning a new language and culture to digging deeper into a country's history and its impact on our society - - it's an exciting way to learn.

The club is also fostering friendships



The International Club has been interacting with fellow students throughout the globe utilizing Google Meet technology. Students are learning and creating friendships with students in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Elementary students experiencing leadership opportunities

For the 2023-24 school year, the elementary school is introducing the first-ever student council for students in grades two through four. But, this is not your ordinary student council. This council is led by the students, for the students. For some added guidance, the student council is

overseen by fourth-grade elementary teacher Ms. Stead.

"So be sure when you step, step with care and great tact. And remember that life's a great balancing act. And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed!"

- Dr. Suess

"We are excited to have this program for our students to learn and understand how to lead at their earliest stages," said Ms. Stead. "We are creating an environment where students are learning the process to build leadership qualities and

build a commitment to not only our school building, but our community as well."

The student council currently has 28 students represented in grades two through four. Students in each classroom elect two representatives who then share information from the council back to their respective homerooms. The council held an election for the role of president, vice-president,

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District backpack program continues to assist those in need

At FFCS, we are committed to our community. Whether that's expanding our student's ability to learn and grow, cheering on their accomplishments in athletics, arts, and music, or preparing them for their future pathway after FFCS - - we are always here to help. One area that FFCS continues to support our families is through the FFCS Backpack program. It's here where students and employees work to find solutions to assist those seeking healthy and quality food options in times of need.

According to a report earlier this year by the New York State Department of Health, approximately one in four adults (24.9 percent) in New York State experience food insecurity. Those statistics present an alarming issue statewide and within our district. Through

careful planning and preparation, we have created and developed a successful process for those individuals, parents, and caregivers to gain access to the necessary food options to stay healthy and strong. The program, led by FFCS Social Worker Mrs. Capron, has adapted throughout the years and is yielding positive results for families in the district.

"We understand that families are experiencing difficulties in gaining access to food sources and we're working with them to not only have healthy and reliable food options, but also to provide outside resources that provide additional support," said Mrs. Capron. "Our district continues to listen, prepare, and deliver essential items to ensure that no family is facing obstacles in locating opportunities to access nutritious meals."



The FFCS Backpack Program continues to provide nutritious and healthy options to families in need. Each week, students from the Life Skills classroom work to sort and pack healthy meals for their school community.



Elementary Leadership Opportunities *Continued from pg 1*

treasurer, and secretary. Advisors are available to provide feedback and guidance throughout the school year.

Students are working to identify activities that engage their classmates while helping our community. Participating students have already held a food drive during the holiday months and provided news and updates to the elementary school through the daily morning announcements.

"We are incredibly proud to introduce this student council for our students," said FFCS Elementary Principal Mr. Romano. "We are excited to share their success and

progress as they learn about leadership qualities, community engagement, and more importantly, have fun in the learning process."

Stay tuned for more updates on the important work being completed by our youngest learners through this engaging outreach project. Follow their successes on the district's Facebook and "X" (formerly Twitter) accounts. The fun has just started!!



You can never be too young to become a leader! At F-F Elementary School students in grades two through four are learning about improving their school community through the first-ever Student Council.

Not pictured: Raenee Neer (Grade 2) and Liam Robbins (Grade 3)

Author delivers a personal message for middle school students

On January 26, bestselling novelist, Varsha Bajaj, participated in a virtual conversation with middle school fifth graders to talk about their recent class project involving her novel, *Count Me In*. The book, published in 2019, addresses the topic of acceptance and how the judgment of different cultures regardless of race, creed, or religion should never be considered. The book also highlights the use of today's social media and its impact on helping others. It presents a perfect story that grabs the attention of today's students to prepare them for real-life situations that can occur in everyday life.

The virtual appearance allowed middle school students to gain access to an author without extensive scheduling for an in-person event. It creates an immediate connection with the author and builds opportunities for

students to learn more about a book or short story. The students, in grades five through eight, have already read and held classroom discussions on the book, and can virtually speak to the author about her background and how she decided to develop the characters and plot.

As part of this virtual conversation with Ms. Bajaj, the district is partnering with Mysteries on Main Street in Johnstown to begin pre-orders of her book online, and books will be mailed to students' homes. Ms. Bajaj personally signs bookplates to put in books. What exactly is a bookplate? A bookplate is a pre-signed card that has the author's signature that can be placed into the book. This is common for virtual book signings and is something fun for the students to collect.

According to her online biography, Ms. Bajaj is a New York Times bestselling author of middle-grade novels. She grew up in Mumbai, India, and when she came to the United States to obtain her master's degree, her adjustment to the country was aided by her awareness of the culture through books. She lives in Houston, Texas.



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The Boys Cross Country team continued their impressive run with yet another Section II Class C Championship title, punching their ticket to a fourth consecutive New York State Championship meet. Additionally, the boys won the WAC Championship by placing their top seven scorers amongst the top 11 finishers in the race.

The FFCS football program experienced their most successful season in program history (12-2). The previous most wins were 10 in 1999. This year's team finished the season ranked #2 in NYS. The team was Section 2 Class C Champions, NYS East Region Class C Champions, and NYS Class C Runners-up. The 2023-24 team were also recognized as a scholar-athlete team with over a 93 overall average.



Mascot update: What to expect

The district is currently working with the graphic design department from the Capital Region BOCES Communications Service to develop a variety of logo options to represent the name Valley Hawks. Additional details will be shared with our community over the coming months and will culminate in a community-wide vote in June to choose the logo that will accompany the name Valley Hawks. Please note that the new mascot will officially be introduced for all school activities, athletics, and district branding at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

We thank you for your continued patience and support during this process. We will update our community as information becomes available.