Greetings, retirees! Welcome to what we hope will be an informative and valuable link back to the Ithaca City School District, the place you called “home” for a significant portion of your lives. We wanted to create this publication for you—representing the legacy that you passed on to the countless children and families for whom you had engaged, educated, and empowered in your careers.

I often speak of the Culture of Love that we are operationalizing in the Ithaca District. We began this journey—some of us together—by thinking of the students, the families, the community partners, and the staff members who make this district what it is. We are forever linked with you in ways that cannot be understated. That culture, along with our key levers of Inclusion, Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices, and Teaching and Learning Innovations unquestionably includes you.

The ICSD Legacy is the result of many retirees voicing their desire to continue to stay in touch with and be a part of the important work that we have built through our commitments to the children of Ithaca. Recognizing that retiree health care is a common interest, we will work to provide you with the clearest and most timely information possible. We want this publication to be beneficial and enlightening to you and would like your feedback to make our upcoming booklets relevant to your needs. If you have ideas that we should explore in this forum, please send your comments to icsdcommunications@icsd.k12.ny.us. With your continued engagement, we are sure to build the Culture of Love in our schools and community that includes everyone.

Dr. Luvelle Brown
Superintendent, Ithaca City School District
Retiree Health Insurance Information

Should I ask my provider if they take the Hartford?

No. We encourage you to ask your provider if they take Medicare instead.

With the new plans, will I receive the same coverage as before?

The ICSD is satisfied that the transition to the fully funded Supplemental F Plan underwritten by the Hartford and the Supplemental D Plan offered by Express Scripts is fully consistent with rights for which your union bargained with the district while you were an active employee. The Medicare supplemental plans mirror or enhance the benefit levels when compared to the benefits offered via the District’s self-insured plan offered by the Consortium on June 30, 2017, our last date of membership.

The District’s intent is not to diminish retiree medical, hospital, or prescription benefits. The ICSD is committed to correcting any gaps in coverage that occur as a result of inadvertent oversights during and after the transition. If you think that there is a service that was covered when the District transitioned to self-insurance, but is no longer covered, please provide proof of that coverage to ENV Insurance, who will serve as your advocate. If you do not have proof, you can easily complete a HIPAA release and ENV will work with Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield to research the past claim for you.

How do I get reimbursed for the Medicare Part D high income penalty?

If you have higher annual earnings, you may now pay an Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) in addition to the cost of your monthly Medicare Part D. The ICSD is committed to reimbursing the IRMAA penalty for your Part D prescription drug plan that occurred upon our switch to the Hartford Plan.

Attach a copy of your Social Security statement in an email to business@icsd.k12.ny.us or mail a copy to the ICSD Business Office, 400 Lake Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. We will then submit the statement as a request for payment, and you will receive a check from us to compensate you for the penalty amount.

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IPEI Awards More Than $20,000 in Grants to ICSD Teachers

The Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) has awarded more than $20,000 to Ithaca City School District (ICSD) teachers for a range of projects connecting community and curriculum— from STEM and social justice to creative arts and literacy.

A total of $8,936.27 was awarded for 22 Red and Gold Grants; $13,212.00 was awarded for 11 Teacher Grants. In addition, three Connecting Classroom applicants were invited to move forward with formal proposals.

“The IPEI Grants Committee is pleased to congratulate these innovative teachers who will enhance student learning and achievement through these exciting grant opportunities,” said Joyce Putnam, chair of the IPEI Grants Committee.

IPEI’s Teacher Grants provide up to $1,500 for innovative community projects inside and outside ICSD classrooms. Red and Gold Grants are one-time awards up to $500 for projects that enrich learning in the ICSD. Connecting Classrooms Grants fund large-scale projects that enhance student engagement and support learning consistent with school and district goals and intend to support collaborative partnerships between teachers within a school, across grade levels and/or between schools.

“We are proud to distribute these grants on behalf of our community to Ithaca’s teachers,” said IPEI President Matt Braun. “These funds are an important investment in our teachers and their curricula and help fosters innovative learning opportunities across all ICSD classrooms.”

IPEI is a not-for-profit organization that connects the Ithaca City School District and the community through collaboration, engagement, gifts and grants. For more information, see www.ipei.org or contact 256-IPEI (4734) or ipei@ipei.org.
### JANUARY EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 11</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Auditorium</td>
<td>Boynton Band Winter Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 16</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>LACS Black Box Theater</td>
<td>LACS Band and Orchestra Winter Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Auditorium</td>
<td>DeWitt Orchestra Winter Concert</td>
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<td>January 18</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Auditorium</td>
<td>Boynton Orchestra Winter Concert</td>
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<td>January 23</td>
<td>12:45 p.m.</td>
<td>BJM Elementary</td>
<td>BJM Winter Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>IHS Kulp Auditorium</td>
<td>Boynton Choral Winter Concert</td>
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<td>January 30</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Enfield Elementary</td>
<td>Enfield Winter Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Caroline Elementary</td>
<td>Caroline Band and Orchestra Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Fall Creek Elementary</td>
<td>Fall Creek Winter Instrumental Concert</td>
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Athletic event schedule: http://www.ithacacityschools.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1052
Fine and Performing Arts: http://www.fabgithaca.org/event_list

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### RETIREE SPOTLIGHT: Ewing helps Belle Sherman students lead, be kind

Retirement didn’t keep Marilyn Ewing away from Belle Sherman Elementary for long – as a volunteer, she now coordinates initiatives that have empowered students to practice kindness and leadership skills.

Ewing, who taught at Belle Sherman for 37 years, facilitates conflict management and composting programs and guides older students who lead their younger peers in making the school a better place.

“I love it at Belle Sherman,” she said. “There are really diverse kids and excellent teachers and staff, and they are great to work with.”

Just months after retiring, Ewing returned to coordinate the conflict management program, which built upon work she’d started while still teaching. She recruited fifth graders to mediate conflicts between younger students during recess, using techniques that encourage respect, listening, and working together to solve problems.

Ewing expected the fifth graders to turn into better mediators, but was pleasantly surprised to see many of the students taking leadership a step further. On their own, students developed a program to teach kindness to second and third graders, with the aim of reducing conflict before it needed to be mediated. The fifth graders talk to younger students about the kind things they did recently, then ask them how they can also be kind.

Students also began presenting on kindness at all-school meetings and taking a leadership role in those assemblies, welcoming students and staff and going over rules and etiquette. Fifth graders also walk younger students to and from assemblies and specials, helping them practice proper hallway behavior.

The leadership initiatives started a wave of kindness among the older students, Ewing said. Last spring, a fifth-grade girl anonymously wrote positive messages on sticky notes and hid them for students and teachers to find. That act inspired another student to come in early to sharpen pencils, which led to yet another student staying late to clean up the classroom. Ewing and others are now working to implement a “pay-it-forward” program.

Watching students take initiative to help others is “uplifting,” said Ewing, who gardens and visits with her children in her spare time. “It keeps me coming back.”

Starting this fall, Ewing began leading students in facilitating Belle Sherman’s...
lunchtime composting program after the school became a model for composting and recycling. Student volunteers stand at disposal tubs and ensure waste is placed in the proper places, working alongside Ewing and custodial staff to ensure the compost doesn’t become contaminated.

The students have embraced the job and are even teaching second and third graders how to sort their trash. “They are so responsible and so committed to doing it right,” Ewing said. “They are really amazing. They just take over completely now. They think of things that would make it better.”

Instead of being excited to be “king of the mountain” in their fifth-grade year, many of Belle Sherman’s oldest students now look forward to seeing which leadership initiative they’ll participate in, Ewing said.

“I think we’ve changed the attitudes to make them want to be leaders now,” she said. “I hope that sticks.”

On Friday, October 27, the Ithaca City School District held its district-wide Professional Learning Community (PLC) Day, formerly called Superintendent’s Conference Day. Staff gathered in the school buildings they serve to focus on this year’s theme: Engaging All Students.

Administrators collaboratively planned learning for the day. ICSD staff from transportation, health and wellness, facilities, administration, and teaching rolled up their sleeves to read and discuss anchor texts, share personal stories, and consider how collaboration and empathy can transform lives and inspire change for all children.

Part of that desired change is the enhancement of a growth mindset: the belief that all children and adults can learn anything and that their intelligence can grow with instruction, effort, feedback, and practice. All staff used ideas related to growth mindset to explore strategies for problem-solving, communicating, and teaching students the social-emotional or academic skills to be successful in our schools.

In the words of one participant, “The engagement was so palpable…the energy was intense in the room.”

This year’s PLC Day was a continuation of a learning journey that began last year when all staff engaged in discussions of a popular TED talk, “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Staff discussed how defining family or student experience based on a single account yields an incomplete and potentially damaging understanding of other people.

In addition to participating in professional development days, ICSD school staff are enriching their thinking about diverse perceptions through the use of texts that are being read and discussed. Some titles include:

- Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students by Zaretta L. Hammond
- Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria: And Other Conversations About Race by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them by Ross W. Greene
- Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning by Sharroky Hollie
- Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real About Race in School by Mica Pollock

The ICSD’s key levers are: inclusion, culturally responsive practices, and innovative teaching and learning. The focus on extending these strategies to all students, and the desire to bridge gaps of misunderstanding and pave the way for deep understanding for all students, inspired staff to learn more about how personal experiences shape perceptions and interactions with others.