



## News & Notes

following the Board of Education Meetings  
of Dec. 19, 2023 and Jan. 16 (rescheduled to Jan. 23), 2024



Front, from left: honorees Allison Tilert, Chuck Ruffino, and Sheila Duino with Board of Education President Jen Michalec. Back, from left: honorees Ashley Kennedy, Jeremy Schiffmaker, and Fritz Schattauer, with Superintendent Dan Pacos and Board of Education Vice President Michael Franey.

## A Night for Special Recognitions

**On Tuesday night, certificates were presented to several employees who were nominated by colleagues to receive Special Recognition from the Board of Education:**

**Allison Tilert, Highland Personal Care Aide, nominated by Laura Howk, for her compassion.**

Mrs. Tilert works in a self-contained classroom with a student who demonstrates a high level of need and requires continuous support. Her compassion for this student is unwavering, and her resilience is admirable. She demonstrates a high level of care every day and is quick to ask for help when needed. She truly has the best interests of her students in mind.

**Chuck Ruffino, A.J. Schmidt Art Teacher, nominated by Jill Clark, for his creativity and ability to capture and tie his students' interests and talents to character development and goal achievement.**

Mr. Ruffino's vision is "There is always a new set of kids who need you in their lives," and his motto is "Art will change your life!" No student is off his radar; he loves them all! When asked why he always goes the extra mile, he says "It's for the kids!" He constantly creates new ideas to engage families and students. Mr. Ruffino is the grassroots founder, with retired teacher Lin Liedke, of Great Lake FX, whose goal is to encourage children to explore their natural environment and discover the beauty in our local community, while representing themselves through art. This non-profit agency is funded through grants sought by Mr. Ruffino.

**Sheila Duino, nominated by Personal Touch, for her dedicated service over more than three decades.**

Mrs. Duino started as a dishwasher at the High School in 1991, then transitioned to food prep, serving, and cashiering. The homemade soups she served to teachers made those days memorable!

When Personal Touch was awarded the food service contract in 2008, Mrs. Duino started working for them. She handled the ala-carte section back when the cafeteria was on both sides, doing a wonderful job and treating every student with the utmost respect. If she didn't get the same respect back, she always gave them a little pep talk - which made a difference.

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## No day off on Feb. 9

Gov. Hochul signed legislation in Sept. 2023 to establish the Lunar New Year as a public holiday. However, it does not go into effect until the 2024-25 school year. Thus, while the 2024 Lunar New Year is Saturday, Feb. 10, Friday, Feb. 9, 2024 is not a public holiday.

**Recognitions Continued ...**

In 2009, Mrs. Duino moved to the Middle School, starting in the dish room. Again, she moved on to food prep, and cashiering, where she has been doing a wonderful job for 14 years.

Mrs. Duino plans to spend her retirement reading, crafting, and traveling to see her children and grandchildren ... and hopefully she will keep bringing her wonderful baked cookies to kitchen staff during the holidays.

**Ashley Kennedy, A.J. Schmidt Personal Care Aide, nominated by Laura Howk, for her compassion.**

Mrs. Kennedy works in a self-contained classroom with a student who demonstrates a high level of need and requires continuous support. She starts every day with a smile, and even on the hardest days, she is always able to find the small wins for her student. She is incredibly patient, understanding, and an absolute gem of a human being. She’s an exceptionally hard worker who constantly helps others.

**Jeremy Schiffmaker, High School Personal Care Aide, nominated by Dr. Katy Berner-Wallen, for his compassion.**

Described as an absolute ASSET to the school staff, Mr. Schiffmaker will do anything to help students. Recently, a medically frail student had to be out for 6-8 weeks after a recent surgery. Concerned that the student would miss all the holiday cheer, Mr. Schiffmaker asked staff to send him cards and help him feel better about his time at home. The staff stepped up with gifts, gift cards to help the family go back and forth from the hospital, cards, and tons of holiday joy. Mr. Schiffmaker personally delivered everything to the family on December 23rd.

**Frederick (Fritz) Schattauer, High School German teacher, nominated by Jeffrey Barnes, for expanding language instruction into an afterschool club, specifically the Dungeons and Dragons Club.** When visiting Germany, Mr. Schattauer purchased rulebooks written in German. Now, the D&D Club has a table that speaks ONLY German while playing. This brilliant idea appeals to students’ desire to play a game and the immersive experience expands their second language skills.

**Presentations**

**Highlights from the Pre-K Presentation by Hoag Building Administrator Christine Starks:**

- Pre-K enrollment jumped with the introduction of a full-day program (vs only half-day).
- In 2018, one-third of incoming Kindergarteners had been in Pre-K. Now, one half of incoming Kindergarteners have been in Pre-K.
- Currently, there are four Pre-K classrooms, each with 18 students, at W.T. Hoag.
- Materials and supplies are provided through the UPK grant.
- Free breakfast and lunch are provided through the Community Eligibility Provision.



*Christine Starks*

**Highlights from the Technology Presentation by Jeffrey Barnes, Director of Technology:**

- School districts are the 2nd most likely target of hackers. Their security systems are similar to those of financial institutions, so if the hack works on ours it will work on theirs.
- School districts must be especially vigilant because hackers like to steal the identities of young students, then open credit cards in their names. It is years before the fake ID is revealed.
- With Artificial Intelligence, even voices can be recreated.
- 3 ways to protect yourself online:
  - 1) use multifactor authentication
  - 2) Use 16-character passwords ... with spaces!
  - 3) Don’t share your passwords!



*Jeffrey Barnes*

**Presentations continued on next page ...**

## Presentations Continued ...

### Highlights from the Presentation by Data Protection Officer Michelle Krieger:

- A Districtwide cyber security risk audit is currently underway.
- This audit takes a ‘deep dive’ into the District’s internal IT systems to assess risks and vulnerabilities. The evaluations range from requirements for web site posts (such as the Parent Bill of Rights, Security & Privacy Policy, and FERPA notifications), to Incident Response Plans and awareness training.
- The audit is part of Lake Shore’s ongoing, comprehensive effort to ensure that adequate policies and procedures are in place to protect sensitive data.



Michelle Krieger

### Highlights from the Electric Bus Grant Discussion with Transportation Supervisor Perry Oddi:

- Lake Shore CSD’s acquisition of 20 new electric buses, via grant, will bring the District nearly halfway to compliance with NYS’s requirement to have all diesel/gas-powered school buses off the road by 2035.
- The alternatives to gasoline/diesel fuel engines are electric or hydrogen powered vehicles and the hydrogen technology is not there yet.
- Electric school bus technology has advanced tremendously since the District first looked into it several years ago.
- The District’s two current electric school buses are performing well and continue to provide safe and reliable transportation.



Perry Oddi

## Personnel Actions



Jason Sullivan, newly-appointed  
High School Assistant Principal

**On Jan. 23, 2024,**  
the Board of Education approved the:

**Probationary appointments of ...**  
Jason Sullivan, Secondary Assistant Principal,  
effective on or about 2/15/24

Jennifer Ray, Bus Attendant, effective 12/18/23

David Orlowski, Monitor, effective 1/2/24

**Provisional appointment of ...**  
Matthew Schwerk, Bus Mechanic, effective 1/22/24

**Resignation of Karielle Case,** Social Worker,  
effective 1/23/24

**Tenure appointment of ...**  
Deanna Civilette, music teacher, effective 1/1/24

**On Dec. 19, 2023,**  
the Board of Education approved the:

**Resignation for the purpose of retirement of**  
Barbara Blaszczyk, Special Education teacher, effective 4/10/24

**Resignations of Jennifer Hudy,**  
Special Education teacher, effective 1/25/24

Lauren Wood, Bus Attendant, effective 11/29/23

**Provisional appointment of ...**  
Georgina Wackowski, Senior Clerk Typist, effective 1/2/24

**Probationary appointment of ...**  
Janel Szalkowski, Personal Care Aide, effective 12/13/23