



**Hellenic Classical Charter Schools (HCCS)  
Park Slope (PS), est. 2005 ◆ Staten Island (SI), est. 2018**

**Christina Tettonis, Superintendent of Schools  
Joy Petrakos, Chief of Operations  
Natasha Caban-Vargas, Principal HCCS-PS  
Cathy Kakleas, Principal HCCS-SI**

**Superintendent Report  
Happy Holidays!  
December 17, 2025**

Attendance: Park Slope 94.2 % Staten Island 94.3%

Application Deadline April 1, 2026

**Open House Dates:**  
December 2 Pre-K Staten Island  
December 4 K- 6 Staten Island  
December 3 Pre-K Park Slope  
December 5 K-8 Park Slope

Spartan Classic Basketball Game; Staten Island vs. Park Slope @ Park Slope 11/25

Science Fair Family Workshop for Grades 3-6 11/22

Nutcracker Performances December 11th; NYC Ballet Nutcracker 11/3

HCCS 20th Anniversary Gala November 20th at The Liberty Warehouse:

Our 20th Anniversary Gala was a huge success. Board Member Grazia Svokos chaired the event and did an extraordinary job. There were over 250 attendees which included board members, community members, families, alumni, faculty, friends, and honored guests. Thank you to Father Ganas, Father Vasileios, Consulate General Dorizos, Charles Capetanakis, Nick Leonardos, Mr. Nikolidakis and alumni for their wonderful remarks during our gala presentations.

We proudly honored nine distinguished faculty members who have been with us since the school's founding. Their dedication, passion, and love for our school have shaped



generations of learners and helped define who we are as a community. The following received special awards:

1. Barnabe Sierra, Custodian
2. Natasha Caban-Vargas , Principal in Park Slope
3. Anastasia Etimos - Dean of Guidance and High School Admissions
4. Cathy Kakleas - Principal in Staten Island
5. Joann Katsaros -Instructional Math Coach/AIS
6. Gabrielle Konstantinidis - Admin Assistant/Data Analyst
7. Joyce Liappas - Office Manager
8. Joy Petrakos -Chief Operating Officer
9. William Tinney - Dean of Students

\* Joy, Anastasia, Natasha and Cathy all spoke at the event about their special HCCS memories.

In addition, special recognition was given to our founding board members who were able to be at the event. Charles Capetanakis, Nick Leonardos, Effie Lekas and Liana Theodoratou were presented with special gifts from Grazia Svokos and Spiros Moustakas.

We are grateful to Charles Capetanakis, Harvey Newman, Nick Leonardos, Effie Lekas, Nik Matthews and Liana Theodoratou, who laid the foundation and continue to serve alongside our new members Dean Angelakos, Spiros Moustakas, Bianca Rajpersaud, and Grazia Svokos.

A special thank you to our tireless Gala Chair, Grazia Svokos, and gala committee Dena Capetanakis, Effie Lekas, Spiros Moustakas, Joy Petrakos, Liana Theodoratou, and Christina Tettonis for making this beautiful celebration possible.

We were honored the following distinguished guests attended:

Board Members: Charles Capetanakis, Nick Leonardos, Effie Lekas, Spiros Moustakas, Bianca Rajpersaud, Grazia Svokos, and Liana Theodoratou.

Consul Petros Dorizas, Greek Consulate of New York

Sonia Parks, Diverse Charter Schools Coalition

CEO CEI, Michael Kohlhagen and Cindy Lopez

Kimisis Board President, Anthony Grigos

PTA Presidents Joanna Tsatis and Alexis Gambino

Alumn

We thank all our HCCS supporters that attended the event and/or donated to our schools. The gala marks an important milestone in our journey. The generosity of so



many will help us to continue to support our robust programs and purchase materials needed for our children.

Staten Island Trailblazer: Board Member Bianca Rajpersaud was named 2025 Staten Island Trailblazer. Congratulations Bianca!

Accountability Designation: NYSED released The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) preliminary accountability support model and annual progress determinations based on 2024–2025 school year results. Park Slope & Staten Island have been designated LSI (Local School of Improvement). Formerly known as a “school in good standing”. Well done HCCS! The 2024-25 New York State Report Card Group 1 release is publicly available on [Public Data Site](#).

The New York State Report Card is an important part of the Board of Regents' effort to create educational equity and raise learning outcomes for all students. Knowledge gained from the report card about a school or district can be used to empower parents, improve instruction, and inform services to students. The report card provides important information to parents/families, school and district leaders, and the public on school/district staff, students, and measures of school and district performance as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The 2024-25 NYS Report Card Group 1 data include annual student results on standardized New York State assessments:

- Grades 3-8 English Language Arts,
- Grades 3-8 Mathematics,
- Grades 5 & 8 Science,
- Annual Regents Examinations,
- Total Cohort Regents Examinations,
- New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT),
- New York State Alternate Assessments (NYSAA) and
- The most recent results on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) administered by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

#### NHD (6<sup>th</sup> Grade)

We have been making progress with our research in both schools.

Staten Island:

The NHD theme for 2026 is Revolution, Reaction, Reform. Both groups from both schools have already selected their topic and have begun the research process.



Staten Island's NHD group of five students have chosen to focus their research on the 1973 Polytechnic Uprising of Athens. They have been studying the various forms of government, including monarchies, rulers, presidents, prime ministers, etc. This team will gather all their research in efforts of writing a script for their Junior Group Performance submission in the NHD contest. While in Greece, they will be visiting the National Technical University of Athens, the Monument and Museum of the Polytechnic Uprising, The Benaki Museum, The National Gallery in Athens, The Gennadius Library at American School of Classical Studies at Athens, The Contemporary Social History Archives (ASKI) and The Hellenic Parliament Foundation for Parliamentarism and Democracy. They will also be getting a VIP tour of the Polytechnic University grounds by author, Iasonas Chandrinos. Chandrinos has also helped the team connect with a primary eyewitness, Giorgos Alexatos who will be interviewed by the students while they are in Athens.

#### Park Slope:

Park Slope's NHD group of four students have chosen to focus their research on the Chios Massacre of 1824 and how the liberation from the Ottomans had a global reaction and Philhellenic impact—especially on James Jakob Williams and Jonathan Peckham Miller, who was then inspired to be a key advocate of the abolitionist movement in Vermont. In addition to their written research, they have been learning how to use the features/tools of Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premiere and Adobe Audition so they could prepare for when it is time to create their documentary. They will be using all their research, interviews, etc. to write a script and generate their documentary. While on their research trip to Greece, they will be visiting the Monastery of Agios Minas, Byzantine Museum of Chios, and The “Mystras of the Aegean”, War Museum of Athens (Hellenic Army General Staff Historical Archive), The National Historical Museum (Historical & Ethnological Society of Greece), The Philhellene Museum, The Benaki Museum (Historical & Archival Collections), and The Gennadius Library at American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

These site visits will give them a great deal of primary and secondary resources that are crucial for meeting the requirements of the contest.

#### AGT (7<sup>th</sup> Grade)

##### Staten Island

Staten Island's AGT team has completed work on the first 1/4 of their script (*Euripides' Bacchae*), including Memorization, Blocking and Character Development. Over the last few weeks, the Cast has incorporated the Acting and Ancient Greek Theatre Theories they learned into their practical work on stage. Additionally, they are working to translate some



of their lines into Greek, including adding some Ancient Greek chants that were performed for Dionysus. In January, the cast will begin working on the next quarter of the show. The Crew completed their initial work on their design proposals. After researching the dress of the Athenian Century, Ancient Greek Theatre costuming and art inspired by Dionysus mythology, they begin designing the costumes. In January, they will give a formal presentation of their proposed designs and estimated costs to Cathy Kakleas and Joy Petrakos, who serve as the Producers for the show, for approval.

### Park Slope

Our Park Slope students have been diving deep into the dramatic sequence of events in the play, Elektra by Sophocles. They have completed a thorough analysis of the text and explored in depth the characters and their emotions. They discussed the role of each scene in advancing the plot of the play, examined the relationships between the characters, identified each character's goals, and analyzed the obstacles they faced.

In addition, they learned about the history of theater and the three great tragedians. Student engagement was excellent, with 100% participation in every session. They will now move onto the staging phase of the production. Our students have also completed a photography session in their costumes for the creation of their performance's poster. The poster has been approved by administration and is ready for advertising

### Student Government (Grades 6-8)

#### Staten Island & Park Slope:

Students of Staten Island and Park Slope Student Governments both volunteered and helped at our Open House in both schools on December 2<sup>nd</sup> & December 3<sup>rd</sup>. They gave speeches on what they love about HCCS, how many years they have been students at our schools, what their favorite memories, clubs, teams, subjects, etc. They then split up into groups and gave guided tours to all the visiting parents.

### Scripps Spelling Bee (Grade 6-8)

Our school-wide spelling bee was on November 4<sup>th</sup>. There were 18 contestants who were from the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Out of our top three winners, our first and second place winners will be advancing to the district bee qualifier on January 30<sup>th</sup>. They have officially been registered and have been provided with the study packet for preparation.

### Park Slope Law and Debate Program

The class has transitioned to Mock Trial Exercises, beginning with lessons on how a trial starts – with opening statements. Students first learned the fundamentals of an effective



opening statement, then watched several examples from legal films. Afterward, they discussed the strengths and weaknesses of each example.

Next, students were given a fact sheet containing witness statements in preparation for a practice mock trial in which the Big Bad Wolf is on trial. The class has been divided into prosecution and defense teams. Together, we are reviewing all witness statements in anticipation of several students presenting opening statements to the class.

Following this phase, we will focus on preparing witnesses to give testimony. Students have been informed that their performance during these exercises will determine the roles they are assigned for the final Mock Trial project.

#### Mathematics:

Melissa Hionas, Dean of Mathematics Curriculum & Instruction of Schools

Kindergarten is continuing their work to master adding and subtracting numbers within five. Some of the strategies in this module include: acting out, using drawings, writing equations, and solving equations. Our mathematicians are also learning to solve unknown word problems with the CHASE problem solving strategy in order to dissect the word problems. To review their practice, our classes are working on winter themed activities. The assessment for this module comes right before winter break.

1st grade is learning to apply the addition and subtraction relationship for numbers within 20. The students are taught to think about addition to subtract and check subtraction, represent and identify related facts, use subtraction to find an unknown addend, solve for an unknown addend, and develop fluency to subtract. By the end of this module, we hope our students are fluent in addition to 20.

2nd grade is in a very exciting unit of money! We begin the unit with coins, their identity and value. We will build on using coins to show amounts in different ways and combinations. The students will relate money amounts to the place value system: ones, tens, and hundreds. Additionally, the students will solve problems dealing with coins, including making change, and being able to justify and defend their results.

3rd grade is continuing to master multiplication. Our Mathematicians are applying properties of operations (identity property, zero property, distributive property, associative property and commutative property) as strategies to multiply. The students can fluently



multiply within 100 and they are working hard to memorize all products of two one-digit numbers.

4th grade is learning to multiply by 2-digit numbers via various strategies. The strategies taught in this unit include estimating, area models, partial products, and regrouping.

5th grade continues to work in the strand of fraction computation. We are currently understanding and applying the operation of multiplication to fractions and mixed numbers. Students use area models to understand the standard algorithm.

6th grade is learning about unit rates, ratios, and percentages. The students are learning to use the problem solving protocol for real-life problems involving rates per one unit and solving for larger quantities. In addition, the students are finding the percent of a number using the percent proportions.

7th grade is using their knowledge of expressions to write in different forms in a problem context and how the quantities are related. The students are learning to apply properties of operations as strategies to add, subtract, factor, and expand linear expressions with rational coefficients. They are applying this work to solve two-step equations for real world situations.

8th grade is using their knowledge of linear equations to understand function rules as linear and non linear models for real world situations. The students are learning to identify what constitutes a linear function from a graph or a table of values. They are also learning to describe qualitatively the dysfunctional relationship between two quantities by analyzing a graph.

### PowerSchool Update

Schoology has launched with our Kindergarten teachers in SI. The teachers, students and families LOVE the new platform. They say "It is more user friendly than Google Classroom." "It feels like Facebook." The Instructional Leadership team will continue to work with teachers to make sure everyone feels comfortable as we prepare a full school implementation in January.

SchoolMessenger & MyPowerHub - we are pending training.

Performance Matters - Anthony and Melissa have met our team and will begin onboarding and implementation this month.

### Peer Professional Learning

Our schools have begun our best practice of Peer Professional Learning/Intervisitation. Last year, we piloted visits between the two campuses for a few departments and we saw great benefits. This year, we decided to extend the visits between a few more departments.



Denise, Maria, and Melissa have been driving the teachers between the two campuses. The middle school teachers, special education teachers, physical education teachers, Greek department, and English language staff have really been enjoying the visits. Our teachers are really diving into the practice of reflecting on their own teaching to highlight one best practice of their teaching and to ask for feedback on a topic from their colleagues. The practice is centered around the Danielson domains. The data driven conversation is facilitated by a Dean or Instructional Coach.

ELA, History, Science ( 3-8)

Dina Bader, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction ELA, History, Science (3-8)

3rd grade has just completed their first nonfiction reading unit and their persuasive writing unit. We are introducing the children to ELA exams early on. Exposing them to reading short passages helps build test prep into the units rather than teach it in seclusion. In writing, we are working on revision. We are guiding students to ensure they fully understand the differences between claims, reasons, and evidence. In science, we are about to finish our first two chapters on inheritance and traits. Students are observing living things and discussing similarities and differences. We will be concluding December by doing a whole class project to help scaffold the process for the Science and Engineering Expo. In social studies, the students are studying Ancient China. We are working hard to again bring vocabulary to the forefront of our instruction as well as text structures we see.

4th Grade is launching our Interpreting Characters Unit. This unit dives deeply into character development and thematic work. The students create theories about characters and reflect on what parts of the text support their thoughts. In writing the students just finished up their final box and bullet essay. The goal of this unit was for the students to master the structure of essays and how to find evidence to support their claims and parts. In history the students are concluding their mini-unit on the Salem Witch Trials. The students also read The Sacrifice, in connection to the unit. This book was very engaging and helped bridge ELA and Social Studies. Students are learning how to take notes on complex historical texts. For Science we are studying waves. The students are very engaged. We are working hard on making sure the students are prepared for the 5th grade science expectations. We will also be doing a whole class project to help scaffold the process for the Science and Engineering Expo.

5th grade is concluding their Interpretation Book Club unit. This unit was very focused on helping students track story elements, and motifs in order to generate strong themes. The



students are also being expected to produce stronger and more developed claims in regards to the books they are reading. In writing, we have begun our narrative unit called: Launch Turning Life into Literature. We have been helping the students apply the craft moves they have been analyzing in reading into their writing. We are hoping students begin to notice and zoom in more on small actions, dialogue, internal thinking and description of setting. In science, the students are currently at the end of the Ecosystem Restoration unit. This unit is focused on food webs and the transference of energy through a food web. We have spent a great deal of time making sure to help students analyze images, charts, and graphs to help prepare them for the state exam. We will conclude the month with a whole class science experiment, just like 3rd and 4th grade. In History we will be moving into Westward Expansion. We are launching it earlier this year as we want to cover more material before the end of the year.

In History for 6th grade, Ms. Benedatos has completed her study of Ancient Egypt and has launched Ancient China. Like last year we are really focused more on how best to structure our notetaking. In 7th grade, we are looking at the French and Indian War. We will then be looking at the results of this war and how they have led to animosities between England and the colonies. In 8th Grade we are finishing up our unit on Industrialization and will be starting World War I when we get back in January.

In Science for 6th grade Ms. Valdez will be concluding the first 2 chapters of the Thermal Energy unit. The students had a chance to use the online simulations and hands on experiments to see how thermal energy transfers and reaches equilibrium. In 7th grade, Ms. Valdez is also finishing her first two chapters on Natural Selection. Our goal across both 6th and 7th is for students to be able to read scientific texts and gather information that connects to the concepts being taught. In 8th grade, Ms. Barnes is concluding her review unit on Natural Selection. We have been making sure to conduct many of the mandated labs early on in the year so we can refer back to them often. Ms. Barnes is also making sure to provide students with plenty of practice in analyzing charts, diagrams and images. They are also being required to write about them using topic specific vocabulary. All science classes will engage in a science or engineering project as a class to help support students in their own projects.

In ELA, 6th grade students are currently concluding their fiction reading unit. The students have been working on developing stronger claims about their stories and using evidence to support their idea. They are then pushing themselves to go beyond and explain how moments of the story help develop these ideas/claims. Our big goal in 6th grade is in



tightening our transitions and taking on more accountability. In 7th grade the students have been finishing up their nonfiction reading unit. This unit looked very closely at structure, transitional phrases, and deepening our vocabulary. The students are also finishing up their informational writing assignment. We have been working on helping students build in quotes from research to support the ideas they are presenting. In 8th Grade, Mr. Johnson is currently concluding his Literary Nonfiction reading unit and Memoir writing unit. Students are being asked to use both their narrative and informational schemas to access these texts. In addition we are making a continuous effort to build their reading stamina. Our goal is to prepare them for High-School and will continue to strive to make sure they succeed in their next endeavor.

In AIS, Ms. Kotsis is beginning to see her students in grades 3-5. We have been looking ahead and making plans to support predictable problems.

## Technology

Kevin Linehan, Dean of Technology

### Project Lead the Way

The 1st Grade in Staten Island has completed their first PLTW module of the year titled Light and Sound

The 2nd grade in Staten Island completed their first PLTW module for the year titled Properties of Matter

The 3rd Grade in Staten Island completed their first PLTW module of the year titled Stability and Motion

The 1<sup>st</sup> Grade in Park Slope has completed their first PLTW module of the year titled Light and Sound

The 2nd Grade in Park Slope completed their first PLTW module for the year titled Properties of Matter.

### Technology in Staten Island

Mr. Linehan is teaching Kindergarten Technology.

The kindergarten in Staten Island was introduced to their iPads on November 18 th . The students have been learning the first blocks to use when writing block code using the Scratch Jr. program. The students are picking up the concept of coding and having fun learning how to write the code to make the characters on the screen move. Since the students are using devices, they are also learning how to properly care for their devices and learning to respect the school property.



Mr. Chirichella is teaching grades 1-7 technology classes.

In first grade the students are using the block coding program Scratch Jr to learn the program interface. The students have experience using the Scratch Jr. program as it was introduced in kindergarten. The students are learning to code more challenging projects this school year.

Grade 2 is using Chromebooks for the first time. Students are learning their school email addresses and passwords and learning to independently log on to their chrome books. This is a big step in learning how to become independent learners. The students are also learning how to navigate the chrome book interface on their own. The students are also learning proper finger placement on the keyboard and learning typing skills.

Grades 3-5 have been continuing to learn block coding using the program Scratch. The program is new to the 3rd grade and is more challenging than the Scratch Jr program they learned in kindergarten and first grade. While some of the concepts are similar and the interface is somewhat similar, it is an adjustment learning the program and Mr. Chirichella is moving at a good pace so that no student is left behind in learning the program.

The 4 th and 5 th grade students have been using the program for more year and are more advanced in the coding process. The activities are more challenging and require more perseverance, however those are skills that make for good coders.

Grades 6 and 7 are learning coding using Python.

### Technology in Park Slope

Evan Eleftheriadis is the Technology Teacher for grades K-8.

In kindergarten the students have been learning the first blocks to use when writing block code using the Scratch Jr. program.

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Grades 6, 7, and 8 are learning coding using Python.

In grade 6 it is the first time the students are using Python and Mr. Evan is introducing the students to the basics of how to navigate the Python interface.

Grades 7 and 8 have been learning Python for a few years and the concepts are more rigorous and challenging than in 6 th grade.

Special Education:

Denise Catapano, Dean of Special Education of Schools

Park Slope & Staten Island:

In Park Slope & Staten Island we are underway with holding our IEP meetings working with the

Committee on Special Education and our families. In Park Slope & Staten Island SETSS providers will be administering midterms to students with testing accommodations.

On December 9th the Park Slope special education teachers visited Staten Island for Peer Professional Learning. On December 11th, the Staten Island team came to Park Slope.

This was a great opportunity for the SETSS providers to work together and support one another. They had

the chance to visit both push in and pull out small group session and provide one another Feedback. Park Slope: Total: 21% Staten Island: Total: 22%



## ELA Grades 3- 7:

### GRADE 3

Reading: In December, third grade students begin the unit *Mystery: Foundational Skills in Disguise*. Students read mystery books and learn to keep track of clues and suspects, note points of confusion, and discuss their thinking with reading partners. Students also work on reading skills including fluency, monitoring for sense, retelling, envisioning, and predicting.

Writing: Third graders begin the third writing unit of the school year, *Structuring Episodes: Writing Series Fiction* in December. They begin the unit by thinking of meaningful moments in their own lives, and then write personal narrative stories about those moments. Students then shift to developing fictional characters of their age, who experience troubles and overcome them.

### GRADE 4

Reading: In December, fourth graders begin the unit, *Detail and Synthesis: Close Reading of Fiction*, and learn to give themselves new goals as they read fiction, including rereading, tracking multiple ideas, and talking deeply about particular passages that spark larger ideas. Students also study characters' traits in their books, the main characters' relationships with other characters, and examine how characters change over time.

Writing: Fourth graders also begin a new writing unit in December, *Literary Essay: Writing about Fiction*. Having just completed a unit on personal essay writing, students transfer their knowledge of essay structure to compose literary essays that contain a claim, support, and evidence. Students start by writing essays about character *traits*, then about character *change*, then about character *relationships*.

### GRADE 5

Reading: In December, fifth graders launch the reading unit, *Fantasy Book Clubs: The Magic of Themes and Symbols*, by reading shared texts in fantasy book clubs. As they make sense of more complicated narratives including complex places and characters, they will keep lists, maps, and timelines to track the story. Since the main character is on a journey, the reader must mimic this journey and attempt to absorb knowledge about characters, places, and conflicts that the main character may have missed.

Writing: In writing, fifth grade students begin the unit, *Literary Essay: Opening Texts and Seeing More*. They will learn to write a literary essay based on the picture book, *A Different Pond*, by Bao Phi. They will learn to craft a compelling thesis statement that captures a big idea about the text, either about a character or a lesson learned. They will



then generate supports for that thesis by identifying multiple times in the text when the thesis was true.

## GRADE 6

**Reading:** In December, students continue the unit *Tapping the Power of Nonfiction*, working in research groups to study nonfiction topics that they will then write informational books about. The unit ends with students repeating the research cycle one more time with a new topic.

**Writing:** In December, students continue the unit *Research-Based Information Writing*, learning to incorporate solid evidence into their writing, including accurate quotes, supportable facts, and clear statistics as they assemble an informational book on a topic of their choice. Students conclude the unit by selecting a digital format to present their work to others such as a slideshow presentation or a website.

## GRADE 7

**Reading:** In December, seventh graders continue the unit, *Essential Research Skills for Teens*, in which they form study groups to research a topic of contemporary and/or scientific significance. In addition to building background knowledge and taking powerful research notes, students study how search engines and the Internet respond to research and become more alert to connotative language and confirmation bias, eventually coming to informed positions, which they will present in flash-debates and TED-style talks.

**Writing:** Seventh graders continue the unit, *The Art of Argument: Research-Based Essays*, in December, developing more focused arguments either for, or against, competitive sports by addressing counterclaims and using research and nuanced reasoning. At the end of the unit, students repeat the argument-developing process with a topic of their own choosing and consider a cyber-method of sharing their views (ie. blog, email, public service announcement).

## Pre-K to 2:

Margaret Rucci, Instructional Coach Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup>

### Pre-K

What we are learning: What do we wear during each season?

Essential Questions: What do we wear during the summer, fall, winter, spring? Why do we wear different items every season? What do we wear when we Dress up?

Enduring Understanding: This month will help students with Understanding what we wear during the



seasons help us recognize how clothing keeps us safe, comfortable, and prepared for different types of weather. As the seasons change, the temperature and conditions change too, and this affects the materials, styles, and layers of clothing we choose. People may dress differently based on where they live or their cultural traditions, but everyone selects clothing that helps protect their bodies and allows them to participate in daily activities. By learning how weather influences our clothing choices, students can make thoughtful decisions about what to wear in each season.

**Vocabulary:** jackets, coats, parkas, windbreakers, raincoats, ponchos, suit coats, blazers, vests, sweaters, sweatshirts, t-shirts, turtlenecks, work shirts, dress shirts, blouses, flannel shirts, jeans, trousers, pants, shorts, neckties, bowties, scarves, gloves, mittens, socks, tights, shoes, boots, sandals, bathing suits, exercise clothes, uniforms costumes, rain boots, snow shoes.

**Centers:**

**Art Center:** Students are engaging with paper and writing utensils, and a mirror, to draw what they are wearing.

**Writing Center:** Students have been practicing writing their Names and letter practice (tracing, using whiteboards, as well as experimenting with textures using pom-poms, squishy bags, playdough, snap cubes)

**Library Center:** Students are reading with puppets. Students are talking to their puppets and their partners about what they are observing while looking at books.

**Math Center:** Students have been given numbers and are using snap cubes to represent that number. They have also been putting together number puzzles with faces and names, soon they will begin to practice writing numbers.

**Dramatic Play:** Students have been pretending to play dress up. Wearing the appropriate and inappropriate clothes for different seasons. They are also dressing up as firefighters, nurses, construction workers, etc.

**Fundations:** Students continue to practice their letters. Students are working on letter sound recognition and identifying words that begin with the sounds the letters make. They also are working on the entire alphabet with the Big Cards that have the letter, the picture and the sound.

**Gross Motor:** Opportunities for movement during transitions and for brain breaks.

**Example:** quick dance parties in between activities, playing motion songs like “head, shoulders, knees and toes,” “If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands,” Students enjoy “Danny Go” as well.

**Fine Motor:** Puzzles, cutting with scissors (straight, curved, zig-zag lines), drawing, stringing beads, and play-dough-which this month is gingerbread scented.



**Read Alouds:** Classroom read-alouds enhance various topics. Supporting science and social studies as well as enhancing vocabulary and listening skills. This month the students will be read to the following books, "The Girl Who Wore Too Much," "The Quinceanera," The Paper Bag Princess," "Abuela's Weave," "Wash and Dry," "Who Wears What," and "Something from Nothing."

**Parent Communication & Resources:** Teachers have kept up communication via emails, Google Classrooms and monthly newsletters.

**Special Events:** The students are preparing for the Holiday Show on Dec 19<sup>th</sup> and are excited for Winterfest on Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> and all the holiday activities. We will create a craft, have refreshments, and enjoy each other's company!

**Kindergarten:** What we are learning:

**Phonics/Grammar:** Reviewing letters/sound. Working on tapping out, changing initial/middle/final sounds to make new (and rhyming) words. Sight words- working on them in isolation and in context through sight word decodables. After winter break we will move into word families

**Reading:** Advancing Literacy Unit: Super Powers. Goals for Super Powers: Using super powers to look and point, and then read everything. Children will learn to point as they read familiar texts using one-to-one matching tapping each word just once, checking that their reading makes sense and pointing to words they know in a "snap". Taking on even the hardest words. Students will learn to use a combination of strategies, not just one isolated strategy at a time, when reading. Bringing books to life. Children will read to themselves and to others, working to make their voices smoother (fluency) and to communicate their understanding of the text (meaning). They will read, attend to patterns, end punctuation and to overall meaning. Being able to retell with 3 details and answering simple "wh" questions such as "who" and "what"

**Writing:** Advancing Literacy Unit: Show and Tell Unit. Student goals and outcomes: Draw a detailed picture with 3-5 labels. Move into pattern books depicting favorite places. Pick a place and chunk it into 3 parts, draw a picture on each page, include a label and begin to write a simple sentence using sight words. Sentence starters include "look at the \_\_\_\_\_" and "this is the \_\_\_\_\_"

**Differentiation:** Students who have not yet mastered letter-sound recognition will continue to focus on creating pictures with labels. If they are mastering this, we will give sentence starters to help with the writing portion. Students who have good letter-sound recognition but are inconsistent at times will be encouraged to draw detailed pictures, add labels, and



write patterned sentences. Students who are excelling will be encouraged to add more to their writing such as zoom-in pictures and chapters.

**Shared Writing & Interactive Writing:** Teachers have been working on creating shared writing texts that will be placed in book baggies. With the teachers, students will first create books about topics. Teachers will then switch to books with sight words and short 3-5 word sentences.

**Parent Communication & Resources:** Teachers have kept up communication via emails, Google Classrooms, and newsletters. Teachers are continuing to send home materials for parents to practice classroom taught skills at home. For example, teachers have made copies of their strategy charts for phonics, as well as reading and writing anchor charts.

**Special Events:** The Kindergarten will be taking a trip to the Brooklyn Children's Museum on Tuesday, Dec 16<sup>th</sup>. The Holiday Show will be on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> and Winterfest will be on Monday, December 22nd. We will create a craft, have refreshments, and enjoy each other's company!

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

**Fundations/Phonics:** Students continue to reviewing letters and their corresponding sounds, as well as letter formation using the Fundations lines/paper. They are forming letters using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods and working on glued sounds - ank, ink, onk, unk.

**Reading: Advancing Literacy Unit: Word Detectives**

Reviewing reading strategies that include sliding finger under words, rereading tricky words to read smoother, and checking that your reading makes sense.

**Shared reading:** working on building fluency and reading more smoothly.

Zooming in on tricky words then zooming out for comprehension. Scooping and working on phrasing to build fluency. Solving Longer Words- Noticing Double Consonants, Watching Out for Compound Words, Breaking off the Ending to Solve Longer Words.

**Writing: Advancing Literacy Unit: How To's.** Teaching students about the proper use of nouns, verbs and adjectives, help to create rich writing and ensures the student creates writing that is accurate and precise in its direction as they write their "How To" books.

**Assessments (Formative and Summative):**

- Spelling Tests
- Math Assessments (Pre, Post & Unit Based)
- Reading Logs (Daily)
- F & P's for students who are not on grade level

**Science:** Students are working on PLTW with Mr. Linehan this month. Students are gathering evidence to explain How can Spruce the Sea Turtle's offspring survive where



there are sharks? The teacher is introducing evidence to the investigation - We can observe differences and similarities between parents and their off-spring, Offspring of living things survive when they are grown. Students learn: Living things have offspring that are the same kind as them. Once they are fully grown, offspring have the same structures as their parents. Offspring may look a bit different from their parents, even though they have the same structures. Offspring defend themselves when they are grown. Offspring survive in the same way as their parents by using structures that are the same as their parents' structures. When plant and animal offspring grow up, they defend themselves in the same way as their parents. Plants and animals of the same kind may look a bit different from one another, but they mostly have the same structures.

**Social Studies: Unit 2: Families and Communities.** Students are focusing on culture, traditions and the holiday season. Discovering that an extended family and our communities have rich culture and traditions and learning them is a privilege.

**Parent Communication & Resources:** Teachers have kept up communication via newsletters, emails and on their Google Classrooms. Teachers have created a folder within google classroom entitled Resources, here parents can practice classroom taught skills at home.

**Field trips/Activities:** The students are preparing for the Holiday Show on Dec 19<sup>th</sup> and are excited for Spirit week festivities, including Winter Wonderland Thursday, Festive Friday, Comfy & Cozy Monday and ending with Ugly Sweater Day.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

**What we are learning:**

**Fundations/Phonics:** Reviewing letters and their corresponding sounds, including standard sounds – ic, ll, Words of the Day including mimic, Echo/Change words like, blank, blink, bling and bring. And new suffixes including less, ment, ful, ness, ish, en, and able. Also, vowel teams of aw and au.

**Reading: Advancing Literacy Unit: Unit 2- Becoming Experts-** The students continue exploring nonfiction texts. Asking yourself “What new information did I learn?”, “What other questions do I have?”. Using multiple nonfiction texts on the same topic to learn a lot about one topic. Reviewing previously taught reading strategies that include sliding finger under words, rereading tricky words to read smoother, and checking that your reading makes sense. Paying close attention to big and small parts of our books so we get all the information. Using graphics and other parts of the book to learn more information.

Checking punctuation and phrasing to help with fluency.

**Assessments (Formative and Summative):**

- Teachers are assessing using Fox in a Box and F&P
- Spelling Tests



- Math Assessments (Pre, Post & Unit Based)
- Reading Logs (Daily)

Writing: Advancing Literacy: Writing Nonfiction From the Heart. Students have just begun to write about topics they know a lot about as well as topics they care a lot about. Students will write about nonfiction topics. Students will begin to write pieces that are broken down into chapters. Students will think about the best ways to show what they know and do this by adding certain text features in their writing. Students will study mentor texts and use what they learn to create introductions and conclusions to their books.

Science: Unit 1: Plant and Animal Relationships

Students are pondering/learning and using the following topics/recourses during this current chapter; "Exploring a Good Place to Grow. Students think independently about and apply the ideas they have constructed about places where new plants can grow before discussing those ideas with a partner. Students consider what they have learned in the context of the Bengal Tiger Reserve. The use of a body model helps them to understand how seeds in the Reserve might not be getting to a place where they can get the sunlight and water they need to grow. And Students worked on PLTW with Mr. Linehan this month.

Social Studies: Unit 2: New York City over Time: Students are learning about the early settlers of NYC. Students are learning about the influence and development of NYC. Students are learning about New York City's population and communities over time, beginning when early settlers first immigrated to NYC.

Parent Communication & Resources: Teachers have kept up communication via emails, with monthly newsletters and on their Google Classrooms.

Field trips/Activities: The students are preparing for the Holiday Show on Dec 19<sup>th</sup> and are excited for Spirit week festivities, including Winter Wonderland Thursday, Festive Friday, Comfy & Cozy Monday and ending with Ugly Sweater Day.

Anastasia Etimos, Dean of Guidance and High School Admissions

High School Admissions 2026; Eighth Grade: 52 students.

Admissions for public high schools, for families to submit their high school applications, closed on December 3. All programs with auditions, screening with assessment, or language criteria, including LaGuardia Specialized High School, closed on Friday, December 5, 2025. Parents had three options for submitting their high school applications: through Mrs. Etimos, who applied on their behalf; through their MySchools.nyc account; or by visiting a Welcome Center.

All 52 (100%) students submitted a high school application.

Specialized High Schools: 26 (50%) registered for the SHSAT.



- 23 (44%) students took the SHSAT online at Brooklyn Technical High School on November 16 and 17. The test included traditional multiple-choice questions as well as “Technology Enhanced” items like drag-and-drop, fill-in-the-blank, and selecting multiple answers. This year, the test was not computer-adaptive, meaning it did not adjust to the difficulty based on a student's performance.

- 2 students, one who missed the test date and another with a new registration, took the makeup exam on December 7, 2025, at Brooklyn Technical High School.

Catholic High Schools:

-30 (55%) students registered for the Test for Admission into Catholic High Schools (TACHS). They all took the exam on Saturday, November 9, 2024.

Mrs. Etimos conducted individual meetings with our 8th-grade families to offer personalized guidance and ensure that every student submitted a high school application. During these sessions, we reviewed and discussed each student's unique interests and strengths to help determine the best high school options for them.

HCCS Social Emotional Learning Programs:

Competent Kids Caring Classrooms (CKCC). The lessons continue to focus on identifying emotions, developing self-control, and fostering empathy.

Scholar Centric

So far this school year, we have administered the ScholarCentric pre-assessment to 6th and 7th-grade students. Students have begun setting goals for themselves and imagining their achievements, whether personal, academic, or developmental. They also identified the steps they need to take to reach those goals. Students were asked to list three careers they are interested in and three ways they will work toward those ambitions.

Reading Go

Ashley Solano, Reading Go! Program Coordinator/Reading Consultant

Reading Go: The Reading Go program has been successfully running for a couple of weeks.

Currently, seven first-grade students are enrolled. Five of these students are receiving one-on-one

reading intervention in addition to their regular classroom literacy instruction with Mrs. Quinones. By the end of the month, all seven students will have been seen. The five students

receiving individual support have improved by at least one set level in Reading Go. To support

school-based instructors during planning sessions, Mrs. Solano is beginning to meet with each

instructor twice per week to rehearse upcoming sessions and provide planning support.



## Physical Education and Athletics of Schools

Adam Konstantopoulos, Dean of Physical Education and Athletics of Schools

### Physical Education

The 3rd Annual HCCS Spartan Classic took place on Monday, November 24, 2025, with HCCS-

SI visiting HCCS-PS. Mr. Crowley's advanced band performed, cheerleaders from both campuses were in attendance, and HCCS-SI introduced its brand-new Spartan mascot. The event

was a huge success and brought a great deal of school spirit just in time for the holidays. HCCS has been selected to receive 30 free pairs of New Balance running sneakers through the

New York Road Runners Sneaker Grant. The sneakers are expected to arrive the week before Christmas.

The 14th Annual HCCS Family Night is scheduled for Friday, January 16, 2026. HCCS has

reserved 500 tickets and has sold 125 so far. If all 500 tickets are sold, the school will earn a

profit of \$2,500, which will go toward supporting our athletic department.

HCCS has sold 45 Athletics Varsity Jackets, which are scheduled to arrive in December.

HCCS-SI has launched a free 9-week basketball clinic for 4th and 5th graders, beginning Thursday, December 4, 2025.

### HCCS–Staten Island Athletics

Our HCCS-SI Fall 2025 seasons in the Staten Island Youth Soccer League have officially concluded. The spring season will begin in March.

Our HCCS-SI flag football season has officially concluded, with HCCS finishing in 3rd place.

Arianna Cross, Amina Cross, and Xyaden Stokes have been selected to represent HCCS in the

League All-Star Game on Sunday, December 14, 2025.

Our 6th and 7th grade basketball team is participating in the 2025–2026 CYO Basketball League. Their current record is 2–4.

Fall 2025 Schedule (September 2025 – December 2025)

Monday: 6 th and 7 th Grade Boys Basketball Practice

Tuesday: 3 rd -7 th Grade Cheerleading

Wednesday: 6 th and 7 th Grade Boys Soccer Practice



Thursday: 4 th and 5 th grade Basketball Camp (Dec 2025)

Friday: 3 rd -7 th Grade Cheerleading

HCCS-SI Spring Athletics

HCCS Softball Team

(new) HCCS Baseball Team

HCCS Boys Soccer team will play in the SIYSL spring season. (grades 4-5)

HCCS Boys Soccer team will play in the SIYSL spring season. (grades 6-7)

HCCS Girls Soccer team will playing the SIYSL spring season. (grades 4-7)

HCCS Soap box (3 rd grade)

HCCS track team (3 rd grade)

HCCS Basketball Camp

HCCS–Park Slope Athletics

he HCCS-PS boys' basketball team is currently competing in the Middle School Athletic League

(MSAL). They are off to a strong start with a 2–0 record, having won their first two games.

Our HCCS-PS girls' basketball team will once again compete in the New York City Middle

School Basketball League, the nation's largest middle school basketball league. They began the

season with a 1–1 record.

HCCS-PS Schedule - Fall 2025 (September 2025 – December 2025)

Monday: 4 th and 5 th Grade Boys Basketball Club

Tuesday: 6 th - 8 th Grade Boys Basketball Practice

Wednesday: 6 th - 8 th Grade Girls Basketball Practice

Thursday: 4 th -5 th Girls Basketball Club/ 6 th – 8 th Grade Cheerleading

Friday: Flag Football Practice

HCCS-PS Spring Athletics

HCCS Volleyball team will join the Brooklyn Leap Volleyball League (Grades 6-8)

HCCS Soccer team (Grades 6-8)

HCCS track and field team (Grades 6-8)

HCCS-PS 4 th and 5 th grade boys' basketball club

HCCS-PS 4 th and 5 th grade girls' basketball club

HCCS Cheerleading (Grades 6-8)

HCCS Boys Basketball (Grades 6-8)

HCCS Girls Basketball (Grades 6-8)



## Upcoming Events

HCCS Homecomings – December 2024

HCCS Family Night – Friday, January 16, 2026

HCCS-PS Senior Nights

January 28, 2026 – HCCS Boys vs. PS 111

February 23, 2026 – HCCS Girls vs. MS 492

HCCS Faculty Softball game – April 2026

HCCS-SI Soap Box Derby Day – May 2026

HCCS Field Days – May/June 2026

HCCS Spartan Cup Classic – June 2026

HCCS Awards Ceremony PS and SI – June 2026

## Physical Education

This month, the HCCS PE Department is emphasizing the affective domain, focusing on teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship, alongside the psychomotor domain, where teachers

are developing skills such as throwing, catching, hand-eye coordination, and object manipulation. Students are practicing these skills using hockey sticks,

## Family and Community Engagement:

Dena Capetanakis, Director of Family & Community Engagement

PS & SI – routine monthly events

Held PTA Executive Board Meeting

Held PTA General Meeting

Continuously Update Website

Continuously send correspondence to families

Prepare monthly calendars.

Planning for January 2026

VIP Reader Day

Picture Retake/Absentee Days – PS & SI – resolve any remaining issues

Assist with monthly special events as needed.

Began preparations for spring events.

Open House Planning

Advocacy Day January 2026

Ring Day Measuring

Graduation Cap & Gown Measuring

PS & SI Science Fairs



PS & SI Book Fairs – March 2026 – planning meeting end of January/early February  
Continue planning Greece Trip Preparations for NHD – January 2026  
Continue planning Greece Trip Preparations for AGT – February 2026  
Continue working with AGT/NHDF families for fundraising.  
Read-a-thon Fundraisers – January 2026

PS only

Continue work on yearbook  
Sweetheart Brunch – 1/31/26  
PS PTA Gala – 4/17/26

SI only

Ice Skating Fundraisers – January 2026  
Sweetheart Dance – 2/7/26  
SI PTA Gala – 5/15/26

Wishing our entire HCCS community a Happy and Healthy New Year 2026!