The Mission of Hendrick Hudson School District, recognized as a bold and innovative home for learning, is to ensure each student is a committed and passionate learner who achieves his or her maximum potential and contributes to society. This is accomplished by a system characterized by:

- A culture of highest expectations for all
- An exemplary staff
- Diverse instructional strategies that meet the individual interest and abilities of all students
- Optimal technology embedded in teaching and learning
- A fully engaged, supportive community dedicated to common goals

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- Hendrick Hudson School District
  61 Trolley Road, Montrose, NY 10548
  (914) 257-5100

The First Day of School 2009

"Great things are not something accidental but must certainly be willed."

Vincent van Gogh

The summer was a time to relax, reflect and energize. The graduating Class of 2009 moved on, and happily we welcome over 200 new kindergarten students, the Class of 2022.

On the first day children, parents, teachers and administrators are both anxious and excited. For most of us, and certainly the children, optimism abounds. We must nurture this optimism and as a school community guide our children to be all that they can be.

The year begins with new leadership on the Board of Education. Marion Walsh is our new President and William Orrichio our Board Vice President. Please welcome Laurie Ryan our newest Board trustee.

Continued on p. 3
A Message from the New Board of Education President

I am honored to be working with the Board of Education as President and look forward to a successful school year. This year represents an important year for our District, as we Celebrate HenHud-400 - the anniversary of Henry Hudson’s voyage in discovering the Hudson River on the Half Moon. It is time to show pride in our District and to celebrate our unique character and history.

The explorer Henry Hudson, our namesake, serves as a strong example for these times which demand optimism, fortitude, and diligence as we chart a new course. Things have never been more difficult in education.

Statewide and nationally, mandates keep increasing. The economic crisis has forced us all to conserve and to work harder. In our district, we have made difficult decisions to allow us to maintain strong programs for students, while keeping tax increases low.

With great challenge, comes greater opportunity. It has never been more important to set high standards for our students so they can succeed in a more competitive world. The Board of Education’s priority this year is to set high goals for the administration to improve student performance, by all measures, and to maximize the potential for each student. We all need to set higher expectations of learning for our children and ensure that they are receiving high caliber, rigorous instruction.

The administration and teachers share the Board’s important goals and have been doing significant work designed to effectuate them.

Our strategic plan sets the framework for continued improvement. This year we are, among other things, continuing to map and improve the curriculum at all levels; ensuring continuing challenge with our new elementary math and ELA programs; developing more enrichment opportunities and electives in the middle school; beginning the implementation of a new engineering sequence in the middle and high school, and emphasizing more science opportunities at all levels. I am thrilled to be part of these exciting times.

As to my background, I work full-time as an education law attorney and have written on education law for many years. In my family, education has been a driving force. Since as early as I can remember, my mother, quoting my grandmother, always said, “Get your degrees; no one can ever take that away from you”. I graduated from New York University School of Law back in 1989 and have always recognized that a strong education opens doors.

I am continuing to pass this message on to my four children; a third-grader at Furnace Woods, a seventh grader at Blue Mountain, a junior in high school, and a medical student who will be graduating from Yale Medical School this year.

I have lived in this community for almost fifteen years and have seen improvements in our District since moving here. We have much more work to do, however. I believe that we have all the ingredients for success and improved teaching and learning. Our work is essential, and we must succeed. I truly love this district and hope to make a difference and see our Board’s goals achieved for true excellence in education for all our children.

Marion Walsh,
Board of Education President

Strategic Planning, 2009-10

What is the status of Strategic Planning in the Hendrick Hudson School District? What is the connection between this plan and the work we do as a district?

When our original plan was completed in 2005, it included eight strategies and three objectives to be completed in five years. In 2007-08, the Strategic Planning Committee wrote an additional two strategies, one dealing with goal setting and the other, curriculum. Last winter, another team wrote an extensive plan supporting innovation in the arts, science, and technology. For more information on Strategy XI, please read the articles by Board President Marion Walsh and our Superintendent, Dr. Daniel McCann.

At this point, we will be concentrating on 24 action plans during the 2009-2010 school year. Many of these plans center on curriculum (what we teach) and instruction (how we teach it). Specific curricular areas include: math and English Language Arts (ELA) in the elementary schools; math, ELA, and social studies at Blue Mountain Middle School; and social studies in the High School. As teachers develop these curricula, they will stress common vocabulary across grade levels and disciplines, will ensure that common assessments are written to guide instruction, and will utilize our on-line tool to record their work.

In addition to the curriculum work, we will continue to stress the teaching of reading and writing in each subject area. Student strengths and areas of need will be addressed, as teachers implement strategies to meet the needs of each learner. Middle and high school families should see additional implementation of the Naviance software, a guidance program used to involve students and their families in personal planning.

Finally, groups of teachers and administrators have formed a middle school enrichment committee, seeking ways to further challenge our students. Other groups are also developing an advisory program for at-risk students in grades 7, 8, and 9.

Schools that stress “continuous improvement” always have very full agendas. Because of our Strategic Plan, our agenda is “SMART”; it is specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and timely. In other words, we have a clear plan that will help us accomplish our goals.

Marion Walsh,
Board of Education President

Dr. Alice Gottlieb,
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Personnel
Our change agenda has been ambitious and will remain so. Over the last several years we have taken major steps to improve our schools and “maximize the potential of each student” guided by our Strategic Plan 2005-2010. To date, we have completed 39 Action Plans with an additional 24 Action Plans scheduled for implementation in 2009-2010.

As a school district we are committed to strengthening and diversifying our instructional program. In these extraordinary economic times we have made decisions to not only preserve the core of our schools but to enhance programs and strengthen curriculum and instruction. This work has been guided first and foremost by the needs of the children. Over the past three years we have sought efficiencies and reallocated resources. We reduced class size in the core academic areas and expanded and revised our elective offerings.

In this edition of Soundings, Board President Marion Walsh highlights several of the significant initiatives we are undertaking. In addition, we are creating a TV studio at BMMS and will expand the use of technology in art classrooms with the purchase of 20 Cintique graphing tablets. Our Five Year Technology replacement plan remains on schedule; we have replaced 250 computers in our high school, added 15 LCD projectors and 4 Smart Boards (30 total in the High School).

This fall a new student information system, Infinite Campus, will provide enhanced communication for parents, students, teachers and administrators. We will also be expanding the use of guidance departments Naviance software program with additional components in the high school and middle school. This program provides greater access to developing a personalized success plan, assessing learning style, skills, and interests, researching post-secondary and career opportunities, tracking college applications from start to finish, learning about scholarships and financial aid, and to helping parents and students be more actively engaged in making educational decisions.

The choral program at Hendrick Hudson High School is under the directorship of Erica Denler who has been training the students for the past four years. This honor is one of many awards and honors that the choral department has received in the recent years.

For the first time in the history of Hendrick Hudson High School choral music, three students from the choral department have been selected to participate in the 2009 All State conference. Seniors Haley Rose and Kelly Lynch, along with junior Naimah Hakim, competed with students from all over New York State. Students are required to audition and those with the highest scores are selected to participate.

In December, the three will travel to Rochester, NY, to spend three days rehearsing with the best vocalists from the state. They will have the opportunity to work with renowned choral conductors in intense rehearsals and sing some of the most beautiful songs in the choral repertoire.

The choral program at Hendrick Hudson High School is under the directorship of Erica Denler who has been training the students for the past four years.

Dr. Daniel McCann, Schools Superintendent
MORE THAN 300 STUDENTS SIGN UP FOR FALL SPORTS AT HEN HUD

More than 300 Hendrick Hudson High School students signed up on August 24 to participate in eight varsity sports this fall at the school.

“As I witnessed many of our students make the commitment to student-athletes, I can’t help but very much appreciate their efforts on a daily basis,” Thomas Baker Hendrick Hudson Athletics Director said. “Athletics can offer a wide variety of lifelong learning experiences and it is my sincere hope and desire that their experiences here at Hendrick Hudson prove to be valuable. I commend all of our athletes for the hard work they have demonstrated already this year.”

The fall season consists of eight sports:
- Boys Soccer under the guidance of varsity coach Chris Cassidy
- Girls Soccer coached at the varsity level by Paul LaVallee
- Football under the direction of varsity coach Paul Natale
- Field Hockey under the direction of varsity coach Liz Lang
- Girls Tennis coached by Brad Fredman
- Cross Country coached by Marcia Bailey
- Cheerleading under the guidance of Laura Bruni
- Volleyball under the direction of Diane Swertfager

Hendrick Hudson sports will undergo several changes in terms of competition. The leagues that teams compete in were changed to a more geographical location to achieve budget savings across the region. Hendrick Hudson will be competing in their league with Ossining, Peekskill, Putnam Valley, and Croton.

One of the largest revisions at Hendrick Hudson will be the Varsity Club with student-athletes. Under the direction of advisor Marcia Bailey, this group will meet monthly to work on community service projects throughout the district. “The student athletes at Hendrick Hudson have always been very visible throughout our community in working at various functions or competing in their contests,” Baker said. “This venue will provide a great way for the student athletes to work with our community, including our elementary students.”

The fall season will once again be highlighted by Homecoming Week. Homecoming Week will commence on Tuesday, September 29 and end with the Homecoming Football game on Saturday, October 3 against Spring Valley. The week will be highlighted by Hall of Fame Inductions for Hendrick Hudson High School. This year will be the fourth class inducted into the Hall of Fame. They will be honored at the Hall of Fame dinner on Friday, October 2 at 7 pm.

This year’s class is:
- John Mills - Longtime baseball coach who passed away in 1982
- Glen Welch - Class of 1974
- Ed Kuss - Class of 1975
- Amy Hanson - Class of 1998
- Joe DiCola - Class of 1999
- Kim Fogarty - Class of 1999
- The 1976 Baseball Team

NEW LEADERSHIP ON HEN HUD
BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Hendrick Hudson School District Board of Education will begin the school year with a new President, Marion Walsh, and a new Vice-President, William Oricchio.

Walsh has served as Board trustee since 2007 and was Board Vice-President during the 2008-9 school year. She is an education law attorney for Ingerman Smith, in Harrison, NY and has written on education law for many years.

“The Board is renewing its goals for academic excellence and progress toward performing among the top districts in Westchester County,” Walsh said. “Together, we can accomplish great things this year and surpass any perceived limits, even with our economic constraints. We all need to show pride in our District and to celebrate our character and history.

Walsh has four children at all levels: Richard at Furnace Woods; William at Blue Mountain, and Anna at Hendrick Hudson High School. Her eldest daughter Kate will be graduating this year from Yale Medical School. She and husband Will, a former Board member, have lived in the community for almost 15 years.

Walsh received her J.D. from New York University School of Law in and a B.A. in Political Science from Long Island University.

Oricchio, a 21-year resident of the district, owns and operates a local accounting practice providing individual and business tax planning, tax preparation, accounting and consulting services. He has been a CPA since 1989. His experience also includes auditing school districts.

“As a parent I am interested in making sure that our children receive a good education and as a CPA I also understand the importance of keeping taxes down while assuring a good educational experience,” Oricchio said. “I thank the community and the Board for its support and confidence and look forward to serving in the best interests of our children and the community.”

All three of Oricchio’s daughters attend Hendrick Hudson High School. His twin daughters, Sarah and Stephanie, are sophomores and his eldest Melissa is a senior. His wife, Susan, is active in the family accounting practice. Oricchio has served on the Board since 2006.

Oricchio received his MS in Taxation from the Lubin Graduate School of Business at Pace University. He received a BS in Accounting, with a minor in Economics from the SUNY College in Oswego and an AS in Accounting from Westchester Community College.

He is also a director for the National Conference of CPA Practitioners and is a member of the Federal and State Tax Committee of the New York State Society of CPA’s.
HEN HUD TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS:
Computer Upgrades; New Student Info System;
New Virtual Servers

While students were on vacation, the Hendrick Hudson Technology Department was busy completing a number of key technology upgrades that include the installation of new computers, a new student information system and the installation of a new efficient virtual server environment.

High School Computer Upgrades
The first full cycle of computer replacements in Hendrick Hudson has been completed as part of a plan successful five-year program, which called for the replacement of a portion of the district's computers on annual schedule. With over 1,000 desktop computers in Hen Hud, spreading the replacement costs over several years was a prudent strategy for keeping budget impacts low. The district also employed a five-year financing plan so that the funding for the replacements has been accrued slowly over the last five years. The computers will now be replaced in one building each year, except that next summer, the district will upgrade all computers district-wide to Windows 7 and Office 2009.

Infinite Campus Deployment Completed
The new Infinite Campus student information system is a huge improvement over the aging SASI system. It offers many new features which will be deployed gradually as staff members become familiarized with it. The application is entirely web based so that all staff members have access to the system 24/7, from any location, including using hand held devices.

The system is fully integrated with the network security system as well as the Special Education software, leading to fewer passwords and easier access to key information, and offers teachers an electronic grade book and an online attendance taking function. In addition, all schools will be using it to complete report cards and progress reports electronically beginning this year.

Report cards will still be sent home as a hard copy until a full transition to a paperless model sometime in the near future.

The new system is the result of the hard work of a team of dedicated teachers, administrators and clerical staff who came together two years ago to research options and put out a bid for new systems. Then the vendor for SASI has indicated that it is "end of life," meaning will not be supported after January 2010.

The proactive planning resulted in Hen Hud being ready to move to a new system this summer.

Server Virtualization Project Completed
In an effort to further reduce IT costs and simplify server management, the Information Technology Department completed a large server virtualization project this summer. Server virtualization is a developing technology that allows organizations to run a server operating system as an application on a "host" server.

In simple terms, it means fewer physical servers, which reduces cooling and electric costs as well as hardware replacement costs. The system, VMware, allows the District to run up to ten virtual servers on one piece of hardware. This summer eight physical servers were converted to virtual machines running on two physical servers. The project took several months to plan and deploy and has been achieved with minimal downtime and disruption to service.

Hen Hud Staff Training Academy Expands
Over the last four years, the district has developed an Instructional Technology Academy for teachers, with the goal of providing teachers with meaningful staff development on the full integration of technology in their instructional practice. The academy began with 15 classes, a number that has increased steadily over the years to a total this year of 35 unique classes on a wide variety of topics for teachers.

Topics include; Using Blogs and Wikis, Creating Teacher Websites, Using SmartBoards, Online Assessment Tools, Creating Digital Stories, Using Streaming Media Tools, Basics of Digital Video, Virtual Field Trips, Creating and Using Webquests, and using the Google Suite.

Instructors come from the ranks of our teaching staff and have proven themselves to be master trainers and instructional leaders. Most of the courses are offered after school while some are offered during the day. Every course has a practical component that is designed to help the participants make real use of the skills they have acquired.

"NUMBER 9, NUMBER 9, NUMBER 9"

First graders at the Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School participated in a project with the number 9. Paper was folded into nine equal boxes and illustrated with either "9 Things About Me," or "9 Things I Want to Learn in First-grade!"

It was a great way to learn on September 9, 2009 (9/9/9), which was also the first day of school.

(Pictured: Carolyn Simon’s first-graders with Brooke Abrams, their student teacher)
NEW ADMINISTRATORS SETTLE IN -- HOW ARE THEY DOING

The Hendrick Hudson School District is committed to attracting and maintaining the best professionals in education with the objective of applying their talents to help our students achieve the maximum potential. Below four new administrators who joined the district in the last two years share some of their experiences.

Caroline Almeida -- Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Service

My role is to facilitate high quality educational services for students with disabilities, ages 3-21, so that with the needed supports and accommodations, they can have access to general education programs and curriculum and be successful at meeting those standards.

I have had the pleasure of meeting many parents and students and have worked with teachers and administrators from all five schools in the district and from many other schools as well, such as BOCES. The bulk of my days are spent chairing meetings, and doing prep work and follow-up work for the Committee on Special Education, the Committee on Preschool Special Education, and the Section 504 Committee.

I have also had the opportunity to provide professional development to our staff and to work with various committees in the district, and assist the director in all of the responsibilities of the Pupil Personnel Department.

There is nothing more rewarding for me than to visit classrooms and see smiling faces and hear from teachers about our students, or to hear from a parent about a special education program or service that has made a difference for their child.

The strategic goals I have focused most on this year include II, V, and VI—ensuring that every student’s individual needs are met, having an exemplary staff, and effectively communicating with students, staff, parents, and the community at large.

I have seen progress in each of these areas, as we work together to improve and expand the services and individualized plans for students in the entire district.

Daniel Callahan -- Assistant Principal Hendrick Hudson High School

My day is very active. I am always interacting with students, teachers, or parents.

There have been quite a few rewarding experiences since coming to Hen Hud. The one that stands out the most is all the work with diversity and the Respect Committee. Current programs like James Childs Diversity Awareness and the Hen Hud/Peekskill Exchange are successful products of a lot of hard work by many people.

The toughest challenge for me is getting to know all 900 students. It is not always easy to get face time with 900 students while you are trying to run a building.

Jonathan Brown -- Assistant Principal Blue Mountain

I am extremely proud of our constructive behavior activities. Our lunchtime intramural tournaments in basketball, volleyball, and soccer went over very well with our students. We expanded the student of the month program to include positive actions. Our ISS program allowed students to maintain and sometimes accelerate their progress in their classes. Students also received the necessary interventions to help prevent the negative behavior that they displayed to end up there in the first place.

Our Tall Ship program was expanded to “catch students doing good things.” Students and teachers could nominate students that they felt modeled exemplary conduct. We had more students nominated this year than in any recent year.

I have worked directly and indirectly with many components of the Strategic Plan. Whether working to provide answers to questions, ideas for implementing aspects of a strategy or contributing in a number of other areas, it is difficult to pinpoint one area.

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I just finished running an Strategic Action team for Strategy XI in the area of Science” and “I am excited for the start of the year for many reasons. Currently I am getting ready for the 9th grade Ice Cream Socials and opening week of school. This year we are introducing some new classes: AP Psychology to upperclassmen and AP World 1 to 9th graders which I am excited for. Also, we are in the planning stages for bringing in an Engineering Sequence.

At the High School we are trying to get smart boards and LCD projectors installed in as many rooms as possible. These tools are excellent educational resources that our teachers can utilize to help support the many different learning styles in the class room.

I am really proud of the there are many; the Spirit Council, the GayStraight Alliance, the Hen Hud/Peekskill Exchange just to name a few.

The High School is really evolving and it is very exciting.

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The toughest challenge for me is getting to know all 900 students. It is not always easy to get face time with 900 students while you are trying to run a building.
We have worked to expose teachers to software that increases the interactivity of technology in their classes. While the common chatter centers around Smart Boards, the Smart Notebook software is extremely valuable in allowing interactivity in the classroom. We have worked to increase the availability of this technology to our teachers. There is no dust collecting on our projectors or Smart Boards.

You never know what a student’s potential is. For this reason you have to treat every student as if they are going to be the greatest at whatever they choose to pursue. I was voted the shiest student in the 8th grade. Four years later I was senior class president and a captain of the debate team. No one would have predicted this. Students have to be fully developed in all areas, not just in terms of the grades that they earn but in their work ethic, conduct and personal expectations. You really never know.

We are working on bringing the Integrated Co-Teach model into our district. This special education approach requires a tremendous amount of trust, communication and planning. Additionally, we have done significant work with data collection and interpretation. We are working this year to share our findings with more members of the school community so we may make appropriate instructional decisions. We are also working towards expanding our behavioral expectations and programs to foster these positive characteristics.

In my first few weeks on the job, I received a number of positive emails from parents welcoming me to the district. These emails have been largely representative to my relationship with the Hen Hud district,

**Enrique Catalan -- Assistant Superintendent for Business**

There is no typical day in the business office. On a daily basis during the school year I come in and talk to my director of facilities to be sure that everything went smoothly during transportation of the kids. Usually, I meet with Dr. McCann and Dr. Gottlieb informally to discuss urgent issues that we need to resolve.

During budget season I discuss financial plans with principals and I spend a lot of time with my staff reviewing payroll and salary schedules, as well as strategizing our needs for the coming year.

During the summer I work with Anthony Merlini (Director of School Facilities, Operations and Maintenance) to make sure that the schools were cleaned and in shape for the next school year. This year we worked on our EXCEL school security projects and all work is being done.

It was rewarding to me that last year we had a tough budget, but we were able to provide all the programs to the students with minimal or no disruption. It was also rewarding that we were able to finance the “Mac Lab” at the High School. It was a challenge to make the difficult decisions that we had to make for the budget to meet our goals.

The capital projects we are going to be working on this year will be the security projects, installing new playgrounds at the elementary schools and the Energy Performance Contract to lower energy costs.

Next year’s budget is going to be a tight budget but it will serve the students, teachers, staff and community. We are conscious of the current economic situation. The business office will closely review expenses without disrupting programs or community events.

**New Staff Members Continued from p. 3**

**History II.  Prior to Hen Hud, Christine was a leave replacement at Irvington Middle School and Anne Dormier Middle School teaching middle school social studies. She received her Masters from Pace University and her BA from Marist College.**

**Jessica Riviezzo – Guidance Counselor at High School**

Jessica is the new guidance counselor at the high school and has been working throughout this summer. Prior to Hen Hud, Jessica was a guidance counselor for The Academy of Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, in White Plains, New York since September 2005 where in addition to her guidance counselor responsibilities she moderated the Students Against Destructive Decisions club and founded and moderated the Dance Club team. Jessica received both her BS and MSEd from Fordham University.

**Michael Witkowich – Social Studies at the High School**

Michael will be teaching Social Studies at the high school. In 2006, Michael taught for two years at John F. Kennedy High School in the Bronx. Recently he taught at Yorktown High School where he taught Global Studies to 9th and 10th graders in the 2008-09 school year. Michael received both his BS and MS from SUNY Cortland.

**Caroline Almeida – Assistant Director of Pupil, Personnel Services (PPS)**

Caroline joined Hen Hud as Assistant Director of PPS in October of 2008. She has established herself as a valuable member of the administrative team and we are very fortunate to have her here at Hendrick Hudson. She is an experienced instructional leader, which is evident in her efforts in serving the children of the district.

Prior to working at Hen Hud, Caroline was employed by the Orange-Ulster Board of Cooperative Educational Services as an Administrative Professional Development Specialist where she provided technical assistance and training to the 18 school districts in the region. She has also worked for the Highland Central School District as a special education teacher, Section 504 Coordinator, IST Chairperson, Crisis Team Leader and served on many committees for the district.

Caroline received her BA, MS and Certificate of Advanced Study from SUNY New Paltz.
Staying in Touch

Staying in touch with our schools is as easy as making a telephone call or logging on to a website. Please use the information below to contact your school. Visit your school’s website for regularly updated news.

Hendrick Hudson School District
61 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
Telephone: 914 257-5100

Buchanan-Verplanck Elementary School
160 Westchester Avenue
Buchanan, NY 10511
Phone: (914) 257-5400

Frank G. Lindsey Elementary School
57 Trolley Road
Montrose, NY 10548
Phone: (914) 257-5500

Furnace Woods Elementary School
239 Watch Hill Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
Phone: (914) 257-5600

Blue Mountain Middle School
7 Furnace Woods Road
Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567
Phone: (914) 257-5700

Hendrick Hudson High School
2166 Albany Post Road
Montrose, NY 10548
Phone: (914) 257-5800

District info:
www.henhudschools.org