

HCST Connections

WELCOME to the latest edition of HCST Connections, where we celebrate the collective efforts and achievements that have propelled HCST toward a triumphant start to the 2023/24 School Year. As we navigate new challenges and embrace innovative initiatives, our community's commitment to fostering success for college and career pathways is evident in every stride we take together.



HCST Peer Leaders Host Holiday Brunch



In December, the Peer Leaders of the Hudson County Schools of Technology gathered at Explore Middle School for their First Peer Leadership Holiday Brunch.

This event celebrated our Peer Leaders' hard work and dedication to the HCST Community. They participated in activities planned by each school, and were able to meet students from across all of HCST. The event was a huge success with over 150 students present.

Thank you to Superintendent Lin-Rodriguez, Explore Principal Krone, Administration from all schools, all Peer Leader Advisors, and our Brunch Committee: Brianna Paulino from High Tech, Desmond Tripp and Kennhi Nguyen from Explore, and Roma Lekovich, Yanibel Rubiera, and Zachary Yabut from County Prep. **Congratulations to all of our Peer Leaders on this wonderful event!**

HCST Judo Program Hosts Tournament for Local Students



On October 27th, the HCST Judo program hosted its second in a series of ongoing judo competitions at the Frank J. Gargiulo campus in Secaucus. Tech Judo, which includes both the High Tech Judo program and the Post-Secondary Open Judo program, began hosting the events to create local competition opportunities for the many high school students that participate in judo through Physical Education classes, after-school judo, and evening judo classes.



One of the factors that has made the Tech Judo competitions so successful is the fact that it's hosted on a Friday evening rather than requiring an entire weekend, as well as its emphasis on teen competitors in addition to Senior Novice and Brown Belt level players. This event attracted competitors from as far away as Pennsylvania and New York.

In what may have been the highlight of the event, the West Point Military Academy sent their entire team of over 35 male and female Cadets. The West Point judo team is usually ranked first or second at the national college level. The West Point team was honored with "Welcome West Point" signs displayed on the school monitors, and a reserved bleacher section. They were also invited to stand on the center mat for the playing of the national anthem during opening ceremonies, and were treated to special lunch boxes prepared by our culinary department for their bus ride back. Their accompanying head officer and coaches were touched by the district's hospitality, and assured us of their return for future events.

Many thanks to Leo Victoria, the many experienced High Tech Judo alumni who volunteered to assist in event duties, and to all the students who helped with event setup and breakdown. The evening was also a very successful fundraiser for the judo program, ensuring that these inspiring events will be able to continue.

County Prep FCCLA Members Attend the 2023 National Conference



The County Prep/ATD Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter finished their highly successful 2022-23 school year with a trip to Denver, Colorado, for the national competition. The seven County Prep members who had won their state level competitions traveled with 7,000 other students from across the country to attend the conference in July.

County Prep/ATD students competed in a variety of events, and attended leadership and educational workshops throughout the week, networking with students and professionals in fields such as workplace skills and many aspects of the fashion industry. Nour Abedullah, Kaylee Bieniowski, Muhammah Elkayal, and Yoseph Elkayal competed in Parliamentary Procedure; Michelle Feliz competed in Job Interview; and Selina Ranade and Melanie Feliz competed in Fashion Construction.

We are also so proud to announce that Selina Ranade, competing against 100 students from around the nation, won 2nd Place in her contest, Fashion Construction. Both FCCLA advisor Mrs. Patten and the trip's chaperones, Ms. Noel and Mr. Gonzalez, have expressed how proud they are of Selina and all the contestants for their hard work, dedication, and professionalism on the trip. Congratulations to all for a job well done



Staff Spotlight: John Zisa, High Tech High School Choir Director



Mr. Zisa, the High Tech Director of Musical Theater led his students to victory in the NBC4/Telemundo 47 Star Choir Contest to appear on "The Kelly Clarkson Show" and perform at the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Rockefeller Center.

"I am fortunate to work with such talented, professional, hardworking musical theater students at High Tech High School," said Mr. Zisa. "In all of our endeavors and performances together, they have always stepped up and this last month has been no exception. I try to always impart onto the students the importance of the process and of

the work- it's not always about the goal of winning something. If too much emphasis is placed on winning, sometimes there's steps along the way that are missed. However, we were fortunate enough to make it through the Top 10, the Top 3 and then to be named the winning choir." Along with our consultant, Ms. Colette Jackson-Belle, Mr. Zisa and his students worked tirelessly on the singing and the choreography, and even included a prop in the performance - Jimmy, the Christmas tree! The night itself was magical, and one that the students and their families will never forget. Besides getting to meet and talk to Kelly Clarkson herself, the students got to shine under the tree on the stage and bring a sense of Christmas hope and joy to all of the people at home watching. It's been a great holiday season so far at High Tech High School for the Musical Theater Students, and it's only just begun.



High Tech Alumni Sydney Millevoi Releases Her First Single



High Tech alum Sydney Millevoi released her first single "Morning Coffee" on November 10th in collaboration with Professor Wilkis Figueroa. Sydney is a singer/songwriter and proud alumni of High Tech High School (2020). She is currently a student at NJCU where she will graduate in the spring of 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Business. Apart from songwriting, Sydney currently works for Silver Pro Entertainment as a wedding singer, singing at venues up and down the east coast. At the beginning of the semester she had the privilege of meeting Figueroa when she enrolled in his Computer Music course at NJCU. Early in the class she was encouraged to share current works, which led to a dream turned into reality.

Heavily influenced by RnB and Pop artists like Ariana Grande, Mariah Carey, and Whitney Houston, "Morning Coffee" is an extension of Sydney's favorite albums growing up and the embodiment of her artistry as she enters the music world. She remarks on how her years at High Tech and the connections she's made there have shaped her budding career as she's worked closely with alumni Frank Pizzo and Josh Fowler upon the release of this song. "It feels unreal that a song I started two years ago that was recorded in my garage has amounted to this."

You can find "Morning Coffee" on all streaming services and @syd.millevoi on all social media platforms!

Listen to "Morning Coffee" Here!



Tap/Click Here to Listen

Biking Our Way to A World of Possibilities



At the beginning of the school year students at County Prep/ATD noticed an increase in the number of students and staff biking to school. They proactively worked with Student Representative to the BOE, Zachary Yabut, Superintendent Lin-Rodriguez, Ms. Mendolla, Mr. Rogers, and the facilities and maintenance staff, to install 2 new bike racks. The bike racks outside campus can now hold up to 36 bikes!

Student Spotlight

In this edition of *HCST Connections*, we highlight a few of our eighth grade and senior year students as they prepare to begin the next chapter of their lives.



Rohan Grover

Rohan, who is in the middle of his 8th grade year at Explore Middle School, hopes to spend his last year focusing on excelling academically, getting involved in extracurricular sporting activities, and making a positive impact on his school community. He's also enjoyed meeting the new 6th graders at the beginning of their time at Explore! "I want to challenge myself, explore new interests, and contribute to a welcoming and inclusive school environment where everyone can thrive. I hope to be an active part of both Student Council and Peer Leadership and look forward to participating in Mathletes. Overall, I am hopeful for a fun, exciting, and memorable year ahead!"



Noelle Dilworth

Noelle, an 8th grader at Explore Middle School, is happy to be back at school to see her friends again and take part in different afterschool clubs. She says that it feels a little different knowing that it's her last year but she's going to make the most of it. "My hopes for my final year are to keep up my grades, make the most out of 8th grade and have fun!"



Brandon Smith

Brandon, who is going into his final year of high school, says it's amazing to be back at school, seeing his friends again, interacting with his peers, and staying after school to participate in clubs and connect with his teachers. "My hopes for this school year are to get all A's, enjoy my time with my friends, get into my dream college, Stockton, and finish my senior year with a bang. I'm so excited to be a senior!"



Parthania Ebid

Parthania says that it feels bittersweet to be a sophomore in high school already, where soon enough she'll be a junior taking her SATs. She's excited for the new experiences and can't wait for another successful year. "I hope to create a long-term plan to help guide me to yet another productive and fulfilling school year. This year I enrolled in additional courses outside of my regular day-to-day high school classes and I plan to join extracurricular activities. Leading this year to be a great challenge, I hope to become more organized and achieve academic success."

High Tech eSports Championship



Congratulations to the High Tech eSports team for once again taking home the state championship belt for the Garden State eSports competition in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate!

Lucas Velasquez, Matteo Amy, Jorge Reyes, and their coach, Mr. Krinsky took home the win in the finals against Cape May County Technical School with an amazing 2-0 victory, closing out the fall season. Lucas Velasquez also took home the All-star award for Super Smash Bros. Ultimate. We are all proud of the team and everything they've achieved this season.

Earl W. Byrd Center Grand Opening of "Montgomery Grill"

Congratulations to the County Prep/ATD Culinary Program on their successful opening of the Montgomery Grill



Linkit Testing Program Helps District Track Student Growth



Earlier this year, all HCST students took a district benchmark test on the Linkit platform in their English, Science, and Math classes. The district uses data from this testing platform to track student growth over the year and across years in all of these subjects, and to make academic decisions for students. New this year, the Curriculum and Instruction office decided to publicly recognize all the top performers on these exams. Trophies were awarded to the top classes in the district across all of the classes. The trophies

will travel from class to class depending on which is the top section in the district for the most recent exam. The winning class will have the honor of holding the trophy until the next test, and the teacher's name and section will be placed on the trophy. In addition to the team awards for the class, individual awards were given to the top scorers in each school on each test. All first, second, and third place students received a challenge coin with the HCST logo with "recognition of academic achievement" written around its edge. This will continue for Linkit B and C with additional awards given to the classes and students with the greatest improvement. Congratulations to all of the winners and keep it up for Linkit B in January!



HCST Continues to Demonstrate Academic Excellence Across Campuses

NJ Board of Education's School Performance Rankings:

High Tech is ranked #23

County Prep is ranked #43

Explore is #47 in NJ: US News and World Report Rankings (improved 59 spots in one year)

Advanced Placement Courses and AP Examinations:

- Our district is paying for the AP test fee
- Teacher training last summer, AP Institute
- Increase AP opportunities for 9th and 10th-grade students
- We had one student awarded the AP Capstone Diploma last year

AP Acknowledgements:

- AP Scholar 3 or higher on 3 exams
- AP Scholar with Honor - Average 3.25 with a 3 on at least 4 exams
- AP Scholar with Distinctions - Average 3.5 with a 3 on at least 5 exams
- AP Capstone Diploma - 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research, and on four additional AP exams of the students choosing.
- AP Seminar and Research Certificate - 3 or higher in both AP Seminar and AP Research

Dual Enrollment:

- HCST has partnered with HCCC, NJCU, SPU, BCCC, Rutgers, SHU and many more institutions
- Every student has the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree in Math and Science from HCCC
- 135+ applications for the Dual Enrollment Scholarship to date

SAT Preparation and Scores:

- The district is offering SAT Prep to Seniors in the fall and juniors in the spring.
- There were 83 seniors who signed up in the fall.
- There are over 260 juniors who registered to begin SAT Prep in January.
- March 9th is a big SAT exam day, and these students will be registering for the test

MTSS:

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support - our office is looking to increase tutoring per NJQSAC mandate
- High Dose tutoring is considered three times per week for 50 hours a semester
- Learning Labs during lunch and after school
- Academic Referral System
- Skills-Based Referral System
- Specific support for our ACTE and ATD students in Math and Science
- Title I Funds: Linkit! Benchmark Assessments & IXL Prescribed Content

State Testing NJGPA Results:

English: HCST 98.1% graduation ready NJ Average: 80.5% graduation ready

Math: HCST 82.3% graduation ready NJ Average: 55.0% graduation ready

Super Bowl Champ Amani Toomer Visits High Tech



On November 8th, retired New York Giants player, 2007 Super Bowl Champion, and Hudson County resident Amani Toomer visited the High Tech High School campus for a very special podcast interview with Audio Visual Production major senior Jose Calderon.

Jose took the initiative to seek out Mr. Toomer, invite him on his podcast, and schedule his visit. As a 4-year Audio Visual Production major focusing on Broadcasting, Jose was more than ready for the interview after researching and crafting excellent questions.

Jose shared, "It was an honor and privilege to interview such a legend in the New York Sports industry. It helped solidify that I'm going to pursue sports broadcasting and proved to myself that I can manage a live interview on such short notice. I'm glad I have the bravery to approach him and ask for the interview. This was a great experience for me!"

HCST Expands Early College Initiative & Dual Enrollment Program

As a continuation of the 21/22 District Goal: Expand the HCST's inventory of articulation agreements, including dual admissions and agreements with Community Colleges, University partners and Industry allies - I am proud to report that we have partnerships with the following higher ed institutions:

LIM College, Bergen Community College, Saint Peter's University, Hudson County Community College, Kean University, Raritan Valley Community College, New Jersey City University, Centenary University, Rutgers University, William Paterson University

All HCST students of our full time High School programs have the opportunity to achieve their Associates Degree through our partnership with Hudson County Community College. With the Dual Enrollment Scholarship, we will support our students to achieve this degree regardless of finances. Additionally, thanks to our Office of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment and Office of CTE, with the dedicated efforts of led by Leticia Garcia - our CTE Programs of Study are aligned with an articulation agreement in the following areas:

Animal Sciences, General Apparel & Textile Marketing Management, Architectural Drafting and Architectural CAD/CADD, Business Administration/Management, Cabinet Maker & Millwork/Millwright, CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician, Child Care Provider/Assistant, Commercial & Advertising Art, General Culinary Arts/Chef Training, Dance, General, Digital Communications & Media/Multimedia, Drama & Dramatics, Theatre Arts, General, Environmental Science, Graphic Design, Kinesiology and Exercise Science, Medical/Clinical Assistant, Music Technology, Radio and Television Broadcasting Technology/Technician, Welding Technology/Welder

High Tech's 20/20 Art Exhibit

We are so excited to announce that five High Tech High School/ACTE students have been selected to participate in an art exhibition at Eonta Space, an independent art and performance venue near Journal Square in Jersey City. The exhibition, entitled 20/20 Vision, opens in December and features the work of twenty artists under the age of twenty. Congratulations to Nour Aziz, Belen Cardoza, Sherly Rodriguez, Valeria Ruano, and Violet Saynuk! "In the course of my 23 years teaching at High Tech I have had the pleasure to work with many gifted and wonderful young people. I am grateful that this continues to be the case and I congratulate our participants."



Forest Chen Excels in County Prep Culinary Program



Forest Chen is a talented pastry chef and student at County Prep/ATD's Culinary program. Forest has baked for many district events, including a recent Board Meeting, and the grand opening of County Prep's Montgomery Grill, and in October he won the Great Northeast Cookie Art and Creativity Contest in Atlantic City! Check out some of Forest's beautiful creations, and of course, kudos to Chef Collins, Chef Delesky, and Chef Palsi for their commitment to educating the next generation of chefs!



CRC Career Closet is Accepting Donations

The Community Resource Center is collecting donations for their Career Closet. Professional attire should never be a barrier to success, so the CRC is collecting donations so that anyone who needs a blazer, tie, or any other piece of clothing can get them free of charge. Donations can be dropped off at the Community Resource Center or with security on any HCST campus. Check out the flier for more information!

DONATIONS REQUESTED! BUSINESS ATTIRE

CAREER CLOSET FOR CLIENTS

We are kindly requesting gently used business attire donations. Help us make a difference in preparing our community for the workforce!

DROP-OFF HOURS
Monday – Friday (9:00AM – 3:00 PM)

DROP-OFF LOCATION
530-48th Street 6th Floor
Union City, NJ 07087



WOMEN'S ATTIRE:

- Suits
- Business Style Dresses
- Skirts
- Dress Pants
- Blouses
- Blazers
- Shoes



MEN'S ATTIRE:

- Suits
- Dress Pants
- Collared Shirts (Long & Short Sleeves)
- Blazers
- Ties
- Dress Socks
- Shoes



ACCESSORIES: Purse, Stockings, Pantyhose, Belts & Briefcase

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QuickBooks Desktop 2018, A Complete Course By Jonat Home, M.S.
Publisher: Pearson ITe Edition
ISBN: 978-0134743613

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Course Information:

- Mondays & Wednesdays
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- Frank J. Gargiulo Campus-High Tech
- One High Tech Way Secaucus, NJ 07094

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CREDENTIAL EARNED:
Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) Certification

PROVIDED BY:
National Healthcareer Association (NHA)

Students will need to purchase their own sphygmomanometers

SCAN HERE



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Thanks to Craig Guy for His Years of Service to HCST

During the December 14, 2023 Board Meeting, former Board President Craig Guy was presented with a plaque of appreciation for effectively leading the HCST School Board of Education during his tenure, expanding the footprint of HCST and supporting innovation in our schools.