



HALDANE

Effects of COVID-19 on Schools

Phil Benante, Ed. D.
November 3, 2021

About Me

- Entering my 4th year as Superintendent of Schools at Haldane
- Previously served the Arlington Central School District for 17 years as a classroom teacher, building principal, and Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Reside in LaGrange with my wife, Kerri, our two sons, Cole (13 yrs.) and Luke (10 yrs.) and our rescue dog, Scout (age unknown)



About Haldane

- Approximately 800 K-12 students on one campus
- 180 faculty and staff
- Average Class Size: approx. 18
- Our students all reside within Philipstown, including Cold Spring, Nelsonville, and Garrison





COVID-19 Impact on Education: A National Perspective

By the end of the 2020-2021 school year, students were on average five months behind in math and four months behind in reading.

The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students the hardest.

As the 2020-2021 school year began, just 40% of students were in districts that offered any in-person instruction.

Source: McKinsey & Company

COVID-19 and Education: The Lingering Effects of Unfinished Learning

Haldane's Response to COVID-19

February, 2020 through March, 2020	"A Hard Day's Night"
April, 2020 through June, 2020	"I'll Cry Instead"
July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021	"Here Comes the Sun"
July 1, 2021 to Present	"Come Together"

“A Hard Day’s Night”

February, 2020 - March, 2020

The period between February 1, 2020 and March 31, 2020 can best be described as one of significant uncertainty, confusion, fear, and trepidation.

Schools transitioned from their regular operating procedures to facilitating fully remote instruction over the course of a two week period--a significant adaptation in a very short period of time.

As such, families had to make similar adaptations in their homes.

“A Hard Day’s Night”

February 27, 2020

Message from Dr. Benante: Coronavirus Inbox x



➔ **Haldane School District** <connect@haldaneschool.org>
to me ▾

Feb 27, 2020, 3:48 PM



Dear Haldane Families:

I understand there may be concerns about preventing the spread of the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in our school community. At this time, there are no confirmed cases in our region and the risk to residents and students is low. However, we are actively monitoring the situation and planning in the event that our community is impacted.

Over the past two weeks we have been in communication with the New York State Department of Health, the Putnam County Department of Health, and the New York State Department of Education, each of whom provided clear guidance for school districts. Haldane school administrators and nursing staff have met to review the recommendations from these departments and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Rest assured that Haldane has always, and will continue to, take proactive measures to combat the flu and other viral illnesses. The District custodial staff thoroughly cleans and disinfects classrooms, offices, bathrooms and assembly spaces on a daily basis. During the extended President’s Day weekend, the Facilities Department conducted more thorough disinfecting of these spaces, as well as a detailed cleaning of doorknobs, railings, and lockers.

We ask for your support in preventing the spread of illness. If your child is ill with a fever and/or cough, please keep your child home from school. Students should remain home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.

We will continue to remain vigilant in ensuring the safest and healthiest environment possible for our students and staff.

Sincerely,
Phil Benante, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



“A Hard Day’s Night”

March 7, 2020



- Meeting with an informed parent to review CDC guidance
- The parent suggested that our schools may be closed for the remainder of the year, perhaps even longer
- The initial guidance from the CDC cited a 12-18 month impact period

- Meeting with Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents
- A meeting among 75 superintendents throughout the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, and Rockland Counties)
 - Some schools had been directed to close for “deep cleaning” for 24 hours
 - Questions remained about whether all schools should close

“A Hard Day’s Night”

March 16, 2020

- Governor Cuomo announced that all schools would be closed through March 31, 2020

“I’ll Cry Instead”

April 20, 2020 - June 30, 2020

- Continued shift within the remote instruction model
- “Do No Harm” approach to our work with students
- Meal delivery for those in need
- How can we get students back on campus?

The HIGHLANDS

Current

Philipstown Beacon Arts Sports Obits Columns ▾ Advertise ▾ Support Our Work ▾ Reac

Cold Spring Man Dies of COVID-19

HC By Staff | April 10, 2020

Father of three lived on Parrott Street

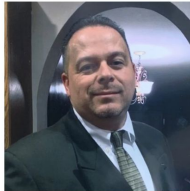
A Cold Spring man died early on Saturday (April 4) of complications related to COVID-19.

Darrin Santos, 50, lived with his wife and three children on Parrott Street. He died at NewYork-Presbyterian Hudson Valley Hospital in Cortlandt.

A Navy veteran, Santos was a transportation supervisor for NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, he drove doctors between hospitals in White Plains and New York City. He also made deliveries to various hospitals.

“He was a great man — I want everyone to know that,” said Melissa Castro-Santos on Wednesday (April 8), the day before her husband was laid to rest at Cold Spring Cemetery. “I miss him so much.”

She added: “I want to thank everyone for their prayers and kind gestures.”



Darrin Santos

- Darrin Santos, parent of 3 Haldane High School students, passes from COVID-19 complications




haldane arts alliance

HALDANE & DRAMA

Fiddler on the Roof
to be presented online
this coming weekend
for a limited time only!



This period of time emphasized the return of all students and staff to campus in the fall. It was our priority to open campus for in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible while adhering to new health and safety guidelines.

These guidelines included:

- Universal mask wearing
- 6 foot social distancing in classrooms
- Routine health screenings of students and staff

“Here Comes the Sun”

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

New York State required schools to attest to over 80 academic, social, emotional, and health and safety assurances.

Our “School Reopening Team” consisted of parents, teachers, support staff, Board members, and school administrators. It was the work of this group that helped us get important information to our families and staff to resolve their questions and concerns regarding the reopening.

Yet, it was becoming ever more apparent that there was a real divide in perspectives about whether schools should open:

Perspective 1

I would like to express my support and appreciation for your team's tremendous efforts. You have shown the utmost care and consideration and a rational, logical approach that leaves room for improvements, developments, and changes along the way. You have communicated to and with the community what the plan is, and addressed concerns and questions in a responsible and considerate manner.

Perspective 2

Many parents are at risk due to age and /or underlying conditions, including myself. By continuing to require students to attend, even with the precautions you have laid out, puts us vulnerable parents at risk of death...I don't think you want it on your conscience that you waited too long, that avoidable parent deaths were caused by your inaction.

“Here Comes the Sun”

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

The COVID pandemic has significantly altered our daily routines and actions-- everything from how we dress, enter buildings, and interact. But it's not just COVID.

Our nation enters another week of escalating protests, as racial tensions in our country continue to reach breaking points in communities throughout the United States. We are a nation divided, a people who not only can't talk to each other anymore, more often than not we can't even be in the same room together...

We can point to the flaws in the system, the things that were overlooked, the issues of funding and support, and I am here to tell you, that at times, we should. Yet, we must also look to each other to engage the better angels within our soul, to ensure that we continue to work through the problem, that we indeed problem-solve, and continue to create and enhance the soul of our school community.



“Here Comes the Sun”

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

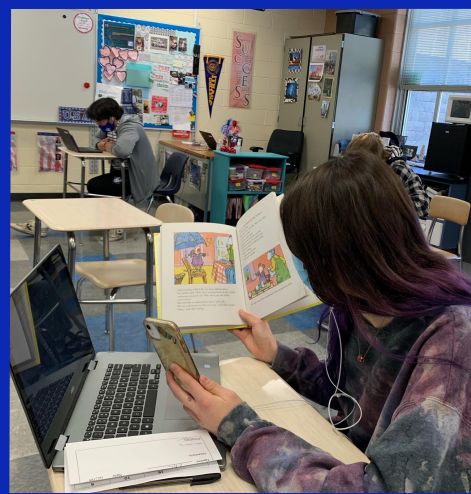
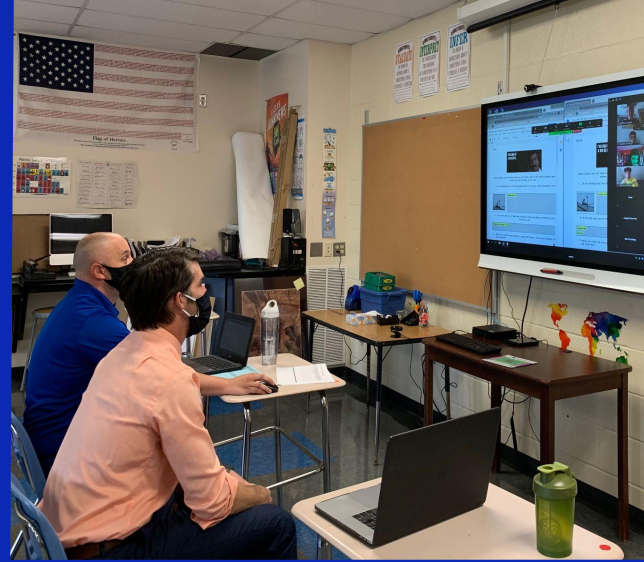
A school’s ability to provide in-person instruction was directly attributed to their class sizes and available space. Generally, schools with lower class sizes were able to provide greater access to in-person learning. For Haldane:

- K-8 students were able to access in-person instruction throughout the school year.
- 9-12 students were in a “hybrid” learning environment between September and March. Once distancing requirements were changed all 9-12 students were able to access in-person learning.

Even though students had the ability to access remote instruction throughout the year, by the end of the 2020-2021 school year 95% of Haldane students were attending school in-person.



- Directing student quarantines became a significant responsibility of school administrators.
- The school district facilitates quarantine notifications at the direction of the local Department of Health.
- Over the course of the school year Haldane administrators directed hundreds of students to quarantine. Very few of these students were diagnosed with COVID.
- The school district hired two specialists to work directly with our youngest remote learners.







Darrin and Daniel Santos, 17, senior athletes at Haldane High School in Cold Spring, lost their father to COVID-19 on April 4, 2020. The twins said that not having sports made coping with their loss harder, but coming to the athletic field and playing sports on their own, along with getting tremendous support from the community, was comforting. *Seth Harrison/The Journal News*

Lohud Sportsmanship Award: Darrin and Daniel Santos, Haldane

“Come Together”

July 1, 2021 - Present

- The opening of school this year was as close to “normal” as we are going to have for the foreseeable future.
- The district ended its “all remote” option for students. This was a necessary step to get some students back into school.
- COVID is now endemic--we have learned how to operate the school with its continued presence in our community.

“Come Together”

July 1, 2021 - Present

- Ninety percent of faculty and staff are vaccinated. Those who are not must complete weekly COVID screening.
- The school continues to offer rapid testing to students.
- Local DOH’s have the ability to permit “test to stay” policies to further offset student quarantines.



SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 | Albany, NY

Governor Hochul Announces Series of Universal Mask Requirements to Protect New Yorkers amid Rise of Delta Variant



TRANSITION OF POWER

Vaccine, mask mandates headline Gov. Kathy Hochul's first address to New Yorkers

Critical race theory battle invades school boards – with help from conservative groups

In towns nationwide, well-connected conservative activists, and Fox News, have ramped up the tension in fights over race and equity in schools.

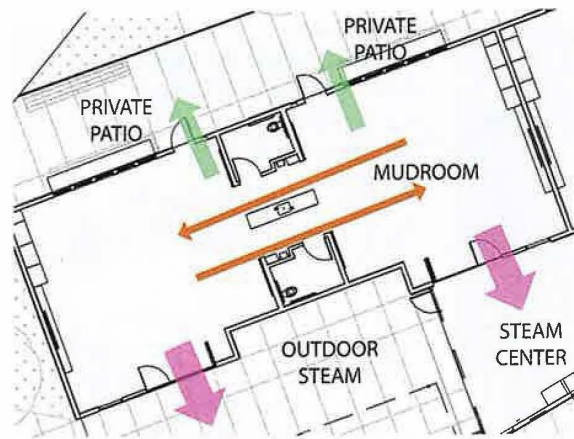
EDUCATION

Mask Mandates, Critical Race Theory Heat Up School-Board Elections



What's Ahead?

- Blended learning models
- Redesigned classroom and campus spaces
- Greater transparency and engagement for effective governance
- “Wrap around services”



Questions & Answers

