



Bogota Public Schools

Education is the Key to Success.

Fall 2020
District Newsletter

National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1982



On September 24, 2020 the U.S. Department of Education officially announced that Bogota's Lillian M. Steen School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon Award. This federal award recognizes outstanding public and non-public schools throughout the United States. According to the Blue Ribbon website, "the program celebrates school excellence, turn around stories, and closing subgroup achievement gaps." For Bogota, this will be the first time our district has been

bestowed with this achievement and is not just an indicator of the hard work of the Steen staff but also a foreshadowing of what is to come in our district. This year, 316 total schools in the United States were awarded the National Blue Ribbon Award and in NJ only nine total schools made the final cut. Only two Title I schools in NJ, including Steen School, achieved this honor. School eligibility is categorized for the Blue Ribbon one of two ways: exemplary high performing schools or exemplary achievement gap closing schools. Steen school's eligibility for the Blue Ribbon was for exemplary high performing schools. Steen had to meet two different criteria to reach eligibility: top 15% in the state in ELA/Math performance separately and top 40% in the state for each demographic subgroup in ELA/Math performance separately. Once those key criteria were met, Steen



school's Principal, Dr. Dayle Collins, had to complete a Blue Ribbon application that included inputting key data and writing several short narratives describing the school and its various components of success. Dr. Collins had this to say about the award, "It is an honor for Steen to be recognized as A National Blue Ribbon School. It is a reflection of the passion, dedication and hard work that our teachers put into our students each day. Without the entire community of Bogota, which has always valued its schools, this would not be possible. We are thrilled and elated with this award."

Computer Science Expanding in BHS

Last academic year, the high school began offering a computer science course through the Amazon Future Engineer grant. The grant, sponsored by Amazon, provides Computer Science courses through the Edhesive platform free of charge to the district. Theresa Henriquez, the school's 7th grade science teacher, stepped up to the challenge to learn, implement, and teach this class. According to the Edhesive course description, the first course, *Intro to Computer Science- Python*, focuses on "the basics of computer programming along with the basics of computer science. The material emphasizes computational thinking and helps develop the ability to solve complex problems. This course covers the basic building blocks of programming along with other central elements of computer science. It gives a foundation in the tools used in computer science and prepares students for further study in computer science." Building upon this Computer Science foundation, we are now expanding this track to offer *AP Computer Science A - Java* in the 2020-2021 school year. According to the course description, "Students will learn to design and implement computer programs that solve problems relevant to today's society, including art, media, and engineering. AP Computer Science A teaches object-oriented programming using the Java language and is meant to be the equivalent of a first semester, college-level course in computer science. It will emphasize problem-solving and algorithm development, and use hands-on experiences and examples so that students can apply programming tools and solve complex problems. Edhesive's AP Computer Science A is approved by the College Board as an authorized AP Computer Science A course." The AP Computer Science course is designed for students who seek a possible career in Computer Programming or for students who have a passion for computer science and hope to learn more in higher education.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.BOGOTABOE.COM AND FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @BOGOTAPUBLIC



NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP Program

On September 1, 2020 the U.S. Department of Justice notified central office that the school district had been awarded \$277,655 under the 2020 COPS Office School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP). In 2019 Bogota Public Schools applied for the SVPP but was not awarded, however the district reapplied in the spring of 2020 during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and was fortunate enough to receive the grant. A highly competitive federal grant program, SVPP will allow the district to continue to make improvements in the overall security posture of all the schools that would not be possible through regular local general funds without making significant cuts or increasing taxes. Only five New Jersey districts and a total of 160 districts nationwide were awarded the SVPP grant in 2020. Because of the nature of the federal grant, the planning, spending, and purchases are tightly regulated and accounted for. Currently, the district is planning on making major improvements to its cameras and overall surveillance systems to reduce dead spots on school grounds and improve the overall visual quality of some of the existing cameras. Major upgrades to communications equipment will be made available so school staff, administrators, and local law enforcement can quickly and easily communicate in case of an emergency. An upgraded and more thorough visitor screening system will be implemented to prevent unauthorized persons from entering our school buildings. Old wooden doors, locks, and other key control hardware will be replaced with stronger, more durable, and safer doors so every room can be secured properly without seasonal swelling and shrinking. In addition to the doors and locks, windows will be reinforced with security film to prevent breakage and access. These are just some of the major items planned for improvement using these funds. The school district truly believes that with these upgrades, our students will be in a safer environment so students and staff can truly focus on the district's main mission: to educate and inspire our students everyday in the classroom.

Principal, Kelly Foley DeCongelio, of Bogota Junior-Senior High School announced that senior, Shehbaz Uddin has been named a Commended Student in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. A Letter of Commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, has been presented by the principal to this talented senior. About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2021 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 scorers of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2021 competition by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®). "Those being named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation. We hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities and encourage them as they continue their pursuit of academic success."

Bogota Board Of Education

- Lisa Kohles - President
- Amanda Montgomery - Vice President
- Idalia Alvarez
- Zabrina Kearns
- Patrick McHale
- Eileen Lewis
- Maureen Miller
- Jim Moore
- Kathy VanBuren

ECR WSS

Current Resident
Or
Postal Customer
Bogota, NJ 07603

- Damian Kennedy - Superintendent
- Irfan Evcil - Business Administrator



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No
1208