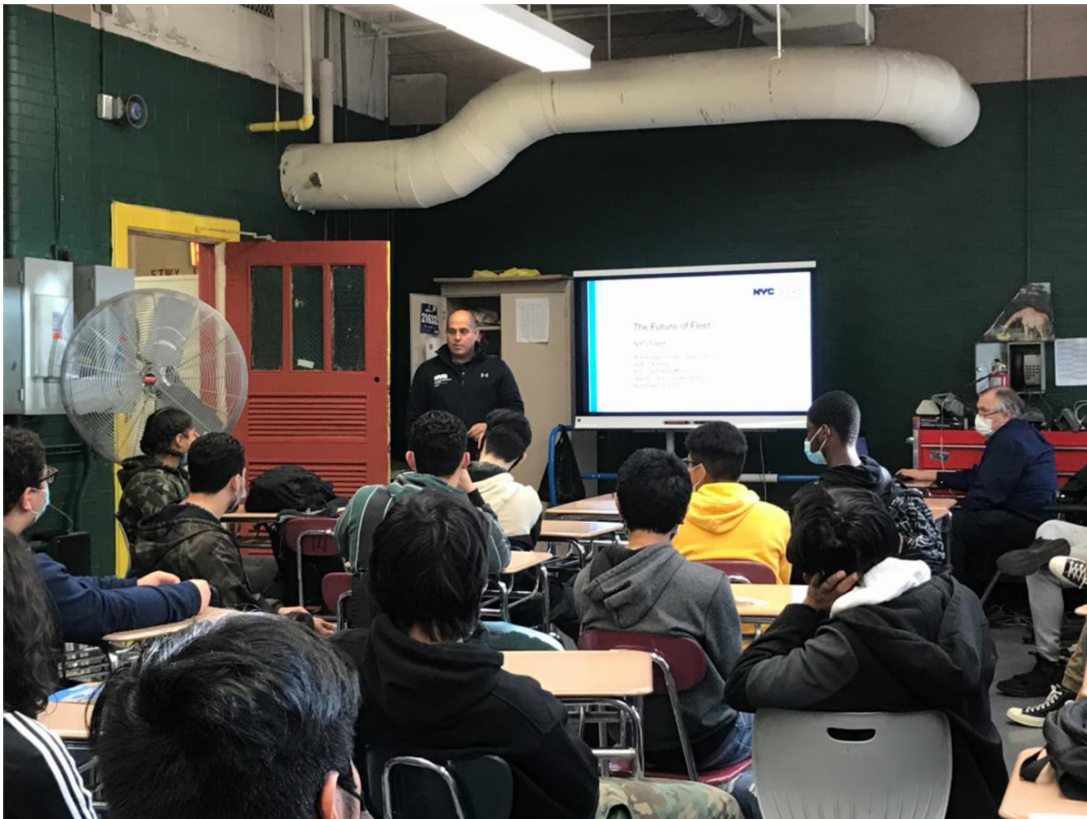


Fleet Spotlight: Ralph McKee Automotive High School

By: Keith T. Kerman

On November 4, the DOE, DCAS, and MTA hosted the first Automotive and Transportation Commission meeting of the new school year as part of the Career and Technical Education program (CTE). DCAS supports the CTE with paid student internships, 20 vehicles and engines used for hands-on mechanical and driver training, and other program support. DCAS recently assigned a hybrid Toyota Prius to Ralph McKee Career and Technical Education High School in Staten Island. Automotive Instructor and Teacher Thomas J. Smolka (TJ) gave a great presentation on the school's technical program at the commission meeting.

On November 19, senior staff from [DCAS fleet presented to nearly 100 students at McKee on the City's fleet sustainability and safety initiatives](#). We could not have been more impressed with the level of engagement, questions, and commitment from the students.



DCAS Deputy Commissioner and NYC Chief Fleet Officer Keith Kerman presenting at Ralph McKee Career and Technical Education High School in Staten Island.

Ralph McKee is a public school that specializes in teaching students the skills they will need to enter one of eight different trade fields, including automotive. TJ joined McKee, two months ago, but he is not new to public service nor teaching, having taught physics and design thinking for eight years at New York City iSchool in Soho.

For many years, the focus at McKee was to prepare students to jump directly into work in the automotive industry upon graduating, and DCAS supported this with a direct pathway to our Automotive Service Worker civil service title. Today, the school has broadened its approach to better prepare students for the future. The school is now trying to help students grow their automotive careers through four different potential career paths: working directly out of school; starting their own business; attending a more advanced trade school; or pursuing a four-year degree. The school is also redesigning its curriculum to engage as many students as possible through different fields of learning. What was once straightforward instruction on how to take apart a car is now an opportunity to teach math literacy, automotive concepts, computer design, and digital parts design. McKee is in the process of acquiring a CNC plasma cutter and obtained a 3D printer so the students can learn to design and create their own automotive parts. TJ hopes that someday the students may even be able to design and build their own motors.



From left to right: TJ Smolka, Eric Richardson, Keith Kerman, Michael Martinez, and Dave Sarno.

In addition to developing the students' automotive skillsets, TJ and McKee are dedicated to preparing students for the cleaner, electric fleets of the future. Working with NYC Parks and DCAS, McKee now has a 2007 Toyota Prius hybrid that will be used to teach electric vehicle systems and autobody repair. The Prius needed a new catalytic converter, which DCAS provided. Learning to install it will be the students' first project with the Prius. While the hybrid will keep his students busy for now, TJ would like to introduce an all-electric vehicle for teaching as a next step, and DCAS plans to help.

When he isn't in the classroom, TJ has been spending time with his newborn daughter and renovating his home. He also runs a fabrication shop out of his backyard and enjoys making artistic or functional pieces for others. We welcome TJ to the automotive side of teaching and thank all the teachers and students at McKee for spending the day with DCAS, talking about sustainability. We look forward to partnering with TJ and all our partnering automotive schools on expanding hybrid and electric vehicle training. Thanks also to Automotive Technology Teachers Dave Sarno and Michael Martinez, and Eric Richardson and Harris Kaplan of DCAS for their efforts pulling together our fleets of the future presentation for the students.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving week!

NYC Fleet Manual

The NYC Fleet Manual and Drivers Handbook has been updated. Please see the updated version at [NYC Fleet Manual and Drivers Handbook](#).

Fleet Vision International Quarter 4



The Fleet Vision International magazine for the fourth quarter of 2021 is out now. This edition features an article written by DCAS Deputy Commissioner and NYC Chief Fleet Officer Keith Kerman on the work NYC Parks is doing to clean, repair, and safeguard NYC parks while reducing fleet emissions.

[Fleet Vision International Q4 2021](#)

DCAS's Inside Citywide Podcast

DCAS's [Inside Citywide podcast](#) provides a behind-the-scenes look at New York City government. Episode 2 takes a look at the future of the City of New York's vehicle fleet as it transitions to all-electric by 2040.



COVID-19 Safety Reminder

For all fleet drivers, please be reminded to wear a mask when operating a fleet vehicle with others in the vehicle. Attached again are the [Department of Health's COVID-19 Safety Guidelines relating to vehicle operation.](#)

Check out past editions of the Fleet Newsletter

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 370, November 12, 2021](#): Fleet Spotlight: DCAS Commissioner Lisette Camilo

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 369, November 5, 2021](#): Vision Zero Dusk and Darkness Campaign

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 368, October 29, 2021](#): City Council Expands Truck Side-Guards Law to Contractors

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 367, October 21, 2021](#): Eric Ritter, DSNY Mechanic, Eclipses World Speed Record for Electric Vehicles

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 366, October 15, 2021](#): NYC Fleet Performance in Mayor's FY21 MMR

Check out the [complete archive](#).

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