

Community connection

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

THE Future Is NOW

A sneak peek at the 2015-16 school year

Looking ahead to the coming year, one can see a host of new initiatives promising to enhance both student and teacher experiences. New academic programs, new developments in existing programs, teacher training, SAT preparation and clubs are on the horizon across the district.

This will be the second year of the school's existing Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, and more teachers are finding innovative ways to enhance lessons by integrating technology into their curriculum. Professional development courses will continue to build upon the success of the program's first year. Professional Development workshops in technology will include Digital Teacher and Google certifications, and continuing interactive teacher training for portable devices.

The new SATs are slated to be rolled out in March of 2016, shifting to reflect Common Core Learning Standards and moving toward a more curriculum-based assessment. Expect to see fewer common-sense mathematics concepts and more classroom-based problems in algebra, trigonometry and geometry. The district is planning professional development that will help teachers incorporate the new material in their classrooms to best meet the needs of students seeking

acceptance to the colleges of their choice.

Additionally, teachers will be offered advanced training to participate in the district's Advanced Placement program over the next few years, as AP courses continue to be redesigned and student



opportunities expanded.

"Whether it's learning about the changes in AP curricula or being introduced to innovative teaching tools to enrich the classroom, professional development opportunities are presented to teachers to positively affect our students' learning experience," said David Seinfeld, the district's assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

Perhaps the most notable curricular advancements for the new year will be seen at Mephram and John F. Kennedy high schools, where the Broadcast Journalism and Culinary Arts and Hospitality programs will launch, respectively.

The Broadcast Journalism program begins in September with a full-year introductory course (BC 1), designed to provide an overview of the profession and its developments over time. According to Marie Netto, the program's director at Mephram, there are currently about 20 students enrolled, with expectations for that number to increase. From both a technological and craft standpoint, the program intends to prepare students with real-world professional practices.

"We are going for real-world experience," said Netto. "Once the broadcasting studio is built, we will be able to offer a hands-on experience for students and show them how the media landscape will change over time."

During the program's research phase, educators visited journalism programs at schools to get a comprehensive look at how the curriculum should be developed and how the program can enrich the learning experience of the broadcasting students. Netto said over the years, some of the possibilities are endless, such as a live telecast of the morning announcements.

For 2015-16 and the immediate years to follow, courses will cover a broad spectrum of issues in journalism. Once the initial cohort moves through the program, students will be able to narrow their focus as they approach their senior year.

"We left that fourth year open to look at the design of a few different electives so students can specialize in areas such as sports broadcasting," Netto said. "By then, they'll have a sense of the top media trends and we'll even look at some internship possibilities and college credit opportunities. Students are looking forward to it, and I can't wait to see what's going to come."

The Culinary Arts and Hospitality program, housed at John F. Kennedy, promises to



deliver a similar real-world experience for students with an interest in the multifarious careers available in the restaurant, hotel and hospitality industries.

Administered by Kennedy's Assistant Principal Jon LaRochester and taught by chef and Kennedy teacher Michael DiGiovanni, the program currently has about 35 students enrolled in its Foundations course. Culinary Arts and Hospitality is a technical education program offered by BOCES at their Barry Tech site. Students who were previously enrolled in the BOCES program would leave campus to receive their training and then come back to the school. This district program brings that learning experience onto a Bellmore-Merrick campus and allows for a multidisciplinary curriculum to be built around it.

"The culinary program really will replace what Barry Tech was able to provide," said LaRochester. "We want to create an environment that can provide technical experience to a kid who may need alternative learning, and also build a robust program that would ultimately allow for an AP student who wants to experience a different aspect of education, yet still take their AP math and science classes."

In time, the school will be getting a state-of-the-art kitchen facility. The program, meanwhile, will be supported with related course offerings, such as Health and Nutrition, and Gourmet Food. The following year, a food science course will examine gastronomy and how heat and boiling temperatures impact food. Beyond that, other disciplines may infuse their instruction with the program's offerings.

"Business teachers will be talking about finances for restaurants," LaRochester said. "Social studies teachers will talk about the impact of culture on cuisine. Health teachers will discuss health and nutrition. The program's potential is amazing."

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A Message from the Superintendent



Dear Members of the Community,

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank students, staff, and parents for a very successful 2014-15 school year! Because of your commitment to the district, we are able to continue the tradition of providing the best educational programs and services for the students of Bellmore-Merrick. Also, thank you for your involvement in our schools throughout the year. Your support has been invaluable to our district – from the teachers and staff who work within our schools to the hundreds of parent volunteers who dedicate their time to our kids.

On another note, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the Class of 2015. This year, the BMCHSD graduated 961 seniors, 98% of whom are moving on to higher education. They've been accepted to many prestigious colleges and universities in the country and have earned millions of dollars in scholarships (please see page 3 of this newsletter for more statistics about our graduating classes). I take great pride in the many accomplishments the graduating classes have achieved and know bright futures await them all. I wish our graduates success and hope they will return to the community and share their accomplishments and experiences with us.

During these summer months, the staff is busy preparing for the start of the 2015-16 school year. We have much to look forward to as we continue to ensure hands-on learning opportunities for students across all disciplines. As you have read on page 1 of this newsletter, the district will introduce several new learning initiatives for students, including Broadcast Journalism and Culinary Arts programs at the high school level. We will continue the Bring Your Own Device program, which proved to be extremely successful and embraced by students and staff alike throughout the last academic year.

Planning for the future, we hope to continue this positive momentum by offering more opportunities to our students which directly correlate to real-life experiences. I can't wait to see what the 2015-16 school year has in store for our students and know that they will continue to strive for success in all areas.

I hope each of you enjoy the remaining days of summer. See you soon!

Sincerely,

John DeTommaso
Superintendent of Schools



BOARD BRIEFS

On July 14, the Board of Education officially kicked off the 2015-16 school year by electing Skip Haile as president and Janet Goller as vice president. Haile and Goller took the oath of office and were sworn in by District Clerk Claire Neufeld.

Gina Piskin, who spent eight years on the Merrick school board, commenced her new three-year term as a BOE trustee. Superintendent John DeTommaso welcomed Piskin as a valuable addition to Bellmore-Merrick.

"I welcome Gina Piskin to the Board and look forward to working with her in the coming months as we continue to make decisions that positively impact our students' education," DeTommaso said.

Facility Update

This summer ushered in many upgrades and renovations to the district's facilities, as Jon Simpkins and his team in the facilities and operations department continue to roll out plans tied to the 2014 bond.

For starters, students will soon see a significant facelift in the bathrooms this fall, as the district is renovating the bathrooms at Mephram High School and Grand Avenue Middle School.

Also at Mephram, work will begin on creating a new Mac lab for the school's Broadcast Journalism program, which rolls out in the 2015-16 school year (see page 1). In addition, new Mac labs will be installed at Calhoun and JFK, as well.

In preparation for the new heating and ventilation units that were part of Phase II of the bond, Grand Avenue Middle School and Calhoun High School will be getting electrical service upgrades to accommodate the increased power required to handle the output of those units when they're eventually installed.

At Merrick Avenue Middle School, workers will be replacing the concrete sidewalks and walkways that are currently cracked and in disrepair.

More residents will be able to grab a seat at Kennedy High School's outdoor sporting events, as the district will be installing additional home-side bleachers to the turf field. Also, the existing wooden bleachers in the visitor section will be replaced with smaller aluminum ones.

The district is waiting to start some of the other Phase II initiatives, some of which cannot be performed when school is in session. Meanwhile, the district's architect has already submitted plans for Phase III of the bond referendum to the State Education Department.

Questions about facilities and grounds work can be directed to Simpkins at 516-992-1032.

Bright Futures Ahead!



From the district's broad educational opportunities to its first-class talent development in the arts, students graduating from Bellmore-Merrick are on the path to success because they have found those areas in which they are passionate and adept.

David Seinfeld, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, seized upon the word "opportunities" to describe the district's commitment to developing young minds.

"The general philosophy of the district as it pertains to instruction is to give students opportunities in coursework that they would find challenging and enriching," he said. "That has a different definition for each child. It's about creating opportunity for students to participate in things in which they're highly interested."

For Bellmore-Merrick, opportunities

abound. In the arts, students can choose from a wide palette of course offerings – Advanced Placement in Art, college-level classes in drawing and painting and 2-D animation, three levels of sculpture, advertising design, fashion design and photography, to name a few.

In the sciences, the district's Advanced Science Research program has introduced many students to the rigors of problem-solving and competition. This past year, one student advanced to the Intel Science Talent Search finals where he met President Obama. Course offerings in the sciences include AP Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics and Psychology. Students can also enroll in college credit courses in Genetics, Human Anatomy and Physiology.


Courses in Music Theory on piano and guitar along with a wide array of performance classes will be offered.

And, of course, there are unique offerings for high school students, such as the Cosmetology program, the Drama program, the business department's Virtual Enterprise course, the Senior Experience internship program and the Project Lead the Way engineering pathway. The Poetry Out Loud competition, the Reflections contest, and a host of extracurricular clubs and activities allow students first to discover and then to pursue their passions.

It's no wonder that graduation rates are near 100 percent and so many students leave the district equipped for success at the college level.

2015 Statistics:

Avg. Percentage of Students Receiving Regents Diplomas:
98%


Percentage of Students Planning to Attend 2-year/4-year Schools:
98%



Avg. Percentage of Students Receiving Advanced Regents Diplomas:
72%


Prestigious Colleges:
Barnard College, Boston College, Boston University, Carnegie Mellon University, Cornell University, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, MIT, NYU, Purdue University, School of Visual Arts, University of Michigan, University of Miami, UNC at Chapel Hill, Villanova University, Wesleyan University, West Point, Yale University.

Congrats TO THE Class of 2015!

It was a day full of pomp and circumstance as the graduating class of 2015 from all three district high schools said their final goodbyes and tossed their caps in the air at the NYCB Theatre in Westbury on June 28.

At Mepham, more than 330 graduating seniors received their diplomas from Principal Michael Harrington, members of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools John DeTommaso.

Those delivering speeches to their peers included Class President Kara Ognibene, who also emceed the ceremony, valedictorian Anand Bradley and salutatorian Jane Kogan. One program highlight was a poetry recitation by graduating senior Jaime Marvin, who was designated this year's poet laureate. Also contributing to the nostalgic atmosphere were members of the senior choir, who sang The Beatles' "In My Life."

Class of 2014 President Griffin Miller emceed the Sanford H. Calhoun ceremony, delivering the welcome remarks and an address along with Class Vice President Daniel Donato.

Principal Nicole Hollings looked back fondly on her first graduation class since becoming principal, using the school's performance of "Mary Poppins" as inspiration for her message of goodwill.

Sen. Chuck Schumer made a surprise appearance, relaying a funny and inspiring story of his adolescence to send a message about choices one is faced with after graduation.

The graduating class also heard from valedictorian David Braunstein and salutatorian Christine Collins.

Board of Education Vice President Skip Haile also lent words of encouragement and wisdom to the Class of 2015, and senior members of the Calhoun chorus sang the school's alma mater and "Promise," arranged by Kirby Shaw.

At Kennedy, 294 students received diplomas during a spirited ceremony that included a choral performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "A Little Pretty Bonnie Lass." The audience also heard from graduating senior vocal performer Mara Friedman, who delivered a stunning rendition of "God Bless America." Sen. Schumer also addressed the graduating class.

Valedictorian Beatrice Brown and salutatorian Nicholas Field shared their thoughts and reflections with the graduating class, as did Class President Anna Lawrence, who wished her fellow classmates well in the future.

Each ceremony culminated with students approaching the stage to receive his or her diploma, followed by the traditional toss of the caps.

Calhoun



Mepham





2015



MAP Holds Commencement Ceremony

Twenty-two students graduated from the Meadowbrook Alternative Program, which is celebrating its eighth year in existence under the leadership of Principal Susan Ellinghaus. The program promotes honor, excellence, respect and optimism in its students, who have had difficulties succeeding in traditional high school settings.

The ceremony featured a presentation of awards and scholarships for students, as well as a special recognition for MAP's Key Club members, who began their own chapter of the organization this year.

This year's valedictorian, Michael Nussenblatt, and salutatorian, Breanna Tardo, addressed the Class of 2015, expressing their appreciation for the program.

"During these last years at Brookside, we learned a lot," said Nussenblatt. "We learned not to take a second chance for granted. Every single one of us here was given a second chance. So whatever you do next – whether it's going to college, going to a trade school or even getting a job – learn from the mistakes you made before, because you only get one second chance."

"Here I am now with my teachers and senior class, who I now consider my family," said Tardo in her address. "I've seen more acts of kindness here than at any other school."



Eighth-Graders Transition to High School

Eighth-grade students at Grand Avenue and Merrick Avenue put a cap on their middle school careers during separate moving up ceremonies on June 12.

The students filed into the auditoriums to the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance" in front of parents, family and peers. They heard from seniors at Calhoun, Kennedy

and Mepham, who provided words of advice and encouragement to the students as they prepared to break for the summer before entering the high school.

The audience heard from student speakers who reflected on their years at middle school and shared their hopes and dreams for high school. Faculty members also took the stage to

provide reflections on the year.

Each student made their way across the stage, receiving handshakes from administrators and teachers as well as their certificates of completion.

The milestone event was punctuated with performances by Word of Mouth at Merrick Avenue and the select chorus at Grand Avenue.





Awards and Accolades

Senior Awards Recapture Stellar Year

More than 200 scholarships and awards were handed out in ceremonies held at all three high schools at the end of the year.

The Senior Awards Program is an annual event that pools scholarships and recognitions both in and out of the district to reward outstanding seniors who have made contributions in numerous fields, including community service. The awards ranged from perfect attendance and academic excellence to memorial awards in journalism and music.

The evening also provides an opportunity for members of each school's respective alumni associations and PTA groups to connect with current students and recognize their work.



Middle School Awards Recognize Excellence

More than 200 middle school students were granted awards during ceremonies at Grand Avenue and Merrick Avenue. The recognitions highlighted the year's achievements of many students, some of whom received awards in multiple categories.

At Grand Avenue, Principal Carlo Conte oversaw the proceedings and introduced presenters for honors such as the Kiwanis Club Award, the Scholar Athlete Award and the Athletic Plaque Awards. Awards were also presented to students in all of the major subject areas, foreign language and technology.

Merrick Avenue granted the Principal's Award to four students, as well as the Assistant Principal's Award, the Extra Mile Award and the New York State Attorney General's Triple "C" Award. Highlights included the Dustin Freda Memorial Scholarship Award and the Billy Garfield Award, granted to two students each.

The annual ceremonies seek to encourage and foster academic excellence as well as a strong sense of community responsibility in young adults.

Ten Inducted into Inaugural Business Honor Society Class

The first New York State Business Honor Society induction was held in the library of Mepham High School in May. Ten students were inducted into the prestigious society. Similar honor society inductions ceremonies were held at Calhoun and JFK, as well.

Requirements included enrollment in three or more business classes, an overall GPA of 90 in those classes, community service, and participation in the Future Business Leaders of America club for one or more years.

The business department at Mepham High School looks forward to celebrating its students' commitment to excellence with NYSBHS inductions for years to come.





Awards and Accolades, cont.



Mepham Teacher, Student Recognized by STANYS

Mepham High School science teacher Heather Bizewski was awarded the Nassau Science Teachers Association of New York State 2015 Outstanding High School Science Teacher Award. The organization also awarded Mepham student Jonathan Spiegel the 2015 Outstanding Science Student Award for his academic research achievements during his four years at Mepham.

Bizewski teaches earth science, collaborative earth science and collaborative environmental

science and is co-moderator of the Mepham Science Club and Science Olympiad team. This coming year, Bizewski will be teaching Advanced Placement Environmental Science.

Spiegel's research was based on an A P-tau epitope study that reveals a possible major error made in Alzheimer's research over the past decade. He plans to pursue a career in clinical medicine and will attend Brown University this fall.

Kennedy Student Wins Recognition at LI History Day

Kennedy High School senior Sydney Guye was honored with the Outstanding Senior Entry on Genocide, Bias or Tolerance award when she participated in the Long Island History Day competition at Hofstra University this past spring.

Guye was selected by the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County for her paper, titled "Sylvia Rivera, Stonewalled: Sylvia Rivera's Fight for Transgender Right." She

participated in the Hofstra competition along with fellow classmates Sydney Tepper and Justin Shapiro.

Long Island History Day is an academic program for which students choose historical topics related to a theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews and historic sites.



Badminton Team Nets Back-to-Back County Crowns

The Calhoun Colts girls badminton team won the 2015 Nassau County Championship, representing back-to-back championships for the lady Colts and nine county championship wins during the past 13 seasons.

The team was led to victory by seniors Nicoletta Freese, Jessica Marrapodi, Claire Murphy and Elaina Walley. Key contributions were made throughout the season by Cara Augugliaro, Muriel Bingham, Nicole Casimano, Kristi Chan, Sanjida Chowdhury, Meaghan Corona, Sophy Feldman, Katie Healy, Jessica Helbock, Phoebe Ma, Briana MacLaren and Dana Piccirillo.

Along this incredible journey, the Calhoun team was undefeated at home and was ranked No. 1 on Long Island by Newsday for multiple consecutive weeks.

The girls were recognized at the June 3 meeting of the Board of Education along with their coaches, Daniel Bowker and David Quartarone.



JFK Student-Athletes Make College Commitments

Fourteen varsity student-athletes at Kennedy High School were recognized by school administrators for their commitment to play Division I, II and III collegiate sports when they head off to college in the fall.

The students were honored during a ceremony held in the school cafeteria in front of an audience of family, friends, teachers and coaches.

Kennedy's athletic coordinator, Craig Papach, hosted the ceremony, introducing each student-athlete, their accomplishments at Kennedy and the college they plan to attend. The schools ranged from Division I Notre Dame to Division III Farmingdale State College.



Calhoun Student Goes National

Calhoun junior Irene Kowalski has been elected president of the New York State chapter of the Distributive Education Clubs of America.

A three-year member of the school's DECA, Irene currently serves as its social media correspondent. As a result of her success at both state and national DECA competitions, she has been elected to the position of president of the state chapter and will be responsible for overseeing more than 120 high school chapters across New York.

Irene was honored for this prestigious position at the May 6 Board of Education meeting.

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