

COUGAR WEEK IN REVIEW

JOHN F. KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Kennedy Families,

Probably what I love most about the holiday recess is getting to reconnect with friends and family. At Kennedy, this part of the holiday started yesterday, when we hosted our annual Alumni Day. This year, the event was even more special, as we held two alumni assemblies. First, members of the Kennedy Class of 2023 shared information about their college application process and first semester experiences with our junior class. I'd like to thank the following Class of '23 alumni for serving on our panel: **Alexandra Levitt, Dustin Abrams, Savannah LoGiudice, Beverly Kleinman, Rachel Oppenheim, Nick Giannaris, Dorien Ford, Nicole Giordano, Skyler Poster, and Luke Feldman.** In addition to this panel, we also held a separate assembly for juniors and seniors, where alumni from throughout the decades spoke with students about what Kennedy was like when they were in high school and how their experiences at our school helped shape their lives today. I'd like to thank the following alumni for taking the time out of their busy schedules to spend time with us: **Joanne Moustakos** (JFK '69), **David Baldinger** (JFK '77), **Seth Zuckerman** (JFK '82), **Seth Lapidus** (JFK '92), **Jamie Forman** (JFK '07), and **Carly Thea** (JFK '11). Above all, I hope this day served as a reminder to all of our alumni and students that Kennedy will always be their home.

I hope you all enjoy the holiday recess with family and friends and look forward to seeing everyone in 2024!

Please enjoy our week in review...

Cougar TV Announcements: <https://youtu.be/VTmEcLbt2a0?feature=shared>

Cougar Crier Newspaper: <https://online.fliphtml5.com/gcalb/ybsz/>

Extra Help Schedule: https://www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us/Assets/JFK_Links/091223_2023-2024_JFK_Extra_Help_Schedule_-_Sheet1.pdf?t=638301259198330000



Alumni Day Panel: Class of 2023



Alumni Day Panel: Alumni from throughout the decades

2023-24 STEM School of Excellence: John F. Kennedy High School has been named an ITEEA 2023-24 **STEM School of Excellence**. As winners of this international distinction, Kennedy High School joins an outstanding group of schools that are impacting and making a significant difference in the lives of students through Integrative STEM (I-STEM) literacy.

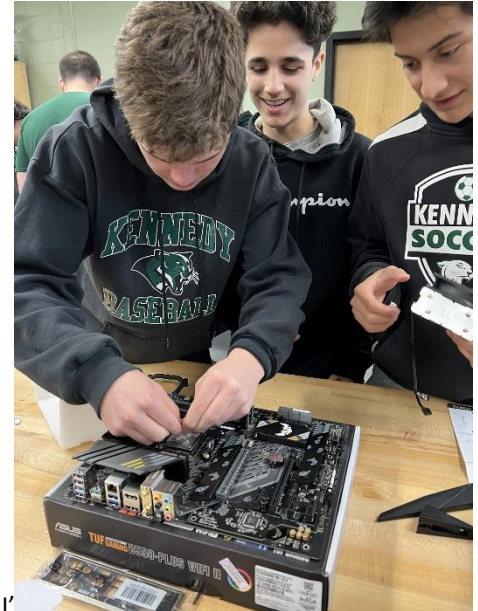
The International Technology and Engineering Educators Association's STEM School of Excellence Award recognizes superior K-12 and Post-Secondary STEM programs from schools all around the world. These schools show outstanding commitment to providing a robust Integrative experience through STEM programs. They are providing a meaningful STEM education experience for students and inspire others to learn effective best practices and instructional strategies to enhance their own programs. These schools serve as a model and inspiration to their communities. They are leaders in their region, province, or state as proponents of advancing STEM education for all.

At Kennedy High School, this award acknowledges the amazing work done by students and teachers in our engineering classes, computer science classes, and ninth grade DDP and STEAM classes. Beyond our innovative STEM curriculum, we are so proud of our award winning VEX Robotics Teams, AFA CyberPatriot Teams, Science Olympiad Teams, Esports Club and Coding Club. The Kennedy students have a wide variety of opportunities and success in STEM. In 2023, our students participated in STEM-projects for community service by designing adaptive technology to assist students with disabilities, completed STEM research projects in ASR and explored STEM careers with local professionals in major school events such as our annual STEAM Career Fair.

Kennedy High School is a hub of STEM excellence in the District and we are so proud to have earned this high honor. In March of 2024, Kennedy will be recognized at the annual ITEEA professional conference and we will receive a STEM School of Excellence banner to display proudly in our main hallway. Please enjoy this [video](#), produced by Cougar TV, which highlights some of our STEM programs and student experiences at Kennedy. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GT0FKSSWa7n7E0LB_Ie-wU07j1VL5mLK/view?usp=sharing



JFK Named 2023-2024 STEM School of Excellence




Yearbook: Now is a great time to purchase a yearbook for your graduating senior. Also, please consider purchasing a Recognition Ad (Parent Ad) for your graduating senior. While the students do a great job commemorating their four years of high school, they really enjoy the ads you purchase and place in the book. The Parent Ad adds something extra special. It is a great way to honor your senior and include information or photos that otherwise cannot be included.

Recognition Ad Info: https://www.jostens.com/apps/store/ybAdDesigner/1055503/-/2023051511151788082/CATALOG_SHOP/

You can purchase both the yearbook and the Parent Ad at www.jostens.com

Cougar Talks: Please join us for Kennedy High School's Cougar Talks program, an evening of unique ideas and important messages presented by the senior students in the School & Community Leadership Program. Over the first semester, these students have identified and developed ideas they are passionate about and have transformed those ideas into a TED-style talk. The messages will resonate and inspire and, perhaps most importantly, provide you with some promise for the future.

This year there will be 23 different presenters over two evenings. The program is on January 9 and 10 at 7pm in the high school auditorium.



**COUGAR
TALKS**

UNIQUE IDEAS SHARED BY KENNEDY STUDENTS
A PRESENTATION BY SENIOR STUDENTS OF THE
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 9
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10**

**7PM
KENNEDY HS AUDITORIUM**
THIS EVENT IS FREE.

In Business News...

John F. Kennedy High School showcased it's VE classes at the 1st Annual Virtual Enterprise Trade Show in the library. Under the guidance and leadership of Ms. Rojas and Ms. Stewart, our Virtual Enterprise classes demonstrated remarkable booth presentations and salesmanship. The event marked a dynamic exchange with Mephram High School and Calhoun High School. The success of this trade show serves as a promising step for our VE classes for upcoming competitions against other high school Virtual Enterprise classes.



CHAMP News: The CHAMP baking and pastry students created 1.5-foot-tall gingerbread cookies as part of their 6th annual Cookies for a Cause project. Tickets were raffled off and all money will be donated to UNICEF. We collected \$428 to donate! Thank you to all the students, faculty, staff and family members who donated money towards this wonderful charity.

The upperclassmen spent their week preparing food for a staff luncheon as a thank you to our amazing clerical, custodial and security staff members.

We want to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and can't wait to for what's next for 2024!



John F. Kennedy Attends the Nassau County 4 Cs Conference

John F. Kennedy High School students recently immersed themselves in the transformative Career, College, Character, and Courage Boys' Conference at Nassau Community College. Hosted by Nassau County Youth Services, the event featured workshops and conferences designed to shape the boys' leadership qualities, aspirations and character. A powerful moment unfolded as they listened to keynote speaker Kevin Richardson, whose compelling life story, as depicted in Netflix's "When They See Us," showcased resilience and courage in the face of adversity. The conference left an indelible mark, empowering these young minds with insights and motivation for their future endeavors.



COUNSELING CENTER UPDATES

January/February Newsletter - Click [HERE](#) to see the latest edition of the Counseling Center Newsletter!

Juniors: March SAT - Kennedy High School will be offering the March 9th SAT in a closed campus setting only for JFK Juniors. This will be the first online SAT offered. If you would like to register, you MUST use the provided link ([HERE](#)) as we are not listed as a test center on the College Board site. If you have additional questions, please see your counselor.

2024-2025 Scheduling: Beginning January 4th, counselors will be meeting with students for next year's course selections. We encourage you to speak with your child about where their interests are in terms of courses or programs and courses. The 24-25 course offerings can be found [HERE](#), along with additional academic information.

Molloy College Dual Enrollment Program: Students enrolled in **Precalculus R, Precalculus H, College Italian, and College Spanish** are eligible for college credit through Molloy for the work they're completing here at JFK. Registration begins on October 16th, 2023 and runs through February 15th, 2024. Students must fill out [this registration form](#). More information can be found [here](#).

Driver Education News: Registration for the Spring Driver Ed session opens online January 3rd. Please visit our website for further information: https://www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us/schools/drivers_education

Junior Class: The Junior Class has been busy getting into the spirit of the season. Last week, they decorated a Polar Express-themed door for "Doors for a Cause" and this week they met and made inspirational cards to be sent to Cardz for Kidz, an organization that delivers handmade cards to children worldwide.



Kennedy Orchestra Holiday Greeting

Kennedy Orchestra students began our last day by before filling the halls with music. They played holiday carols as students entered the building and brought lots of festive spirit! **Julia Cohen, Fiona Yeung, Phillip Chou, Jacob Krukas, Sophie Rich, Jocelyn Yeung, Louis Auyeung, Athina Malafis, Justin Barrera, Kellan Auyeung, Dillon Hopp, Evan Dinin.**



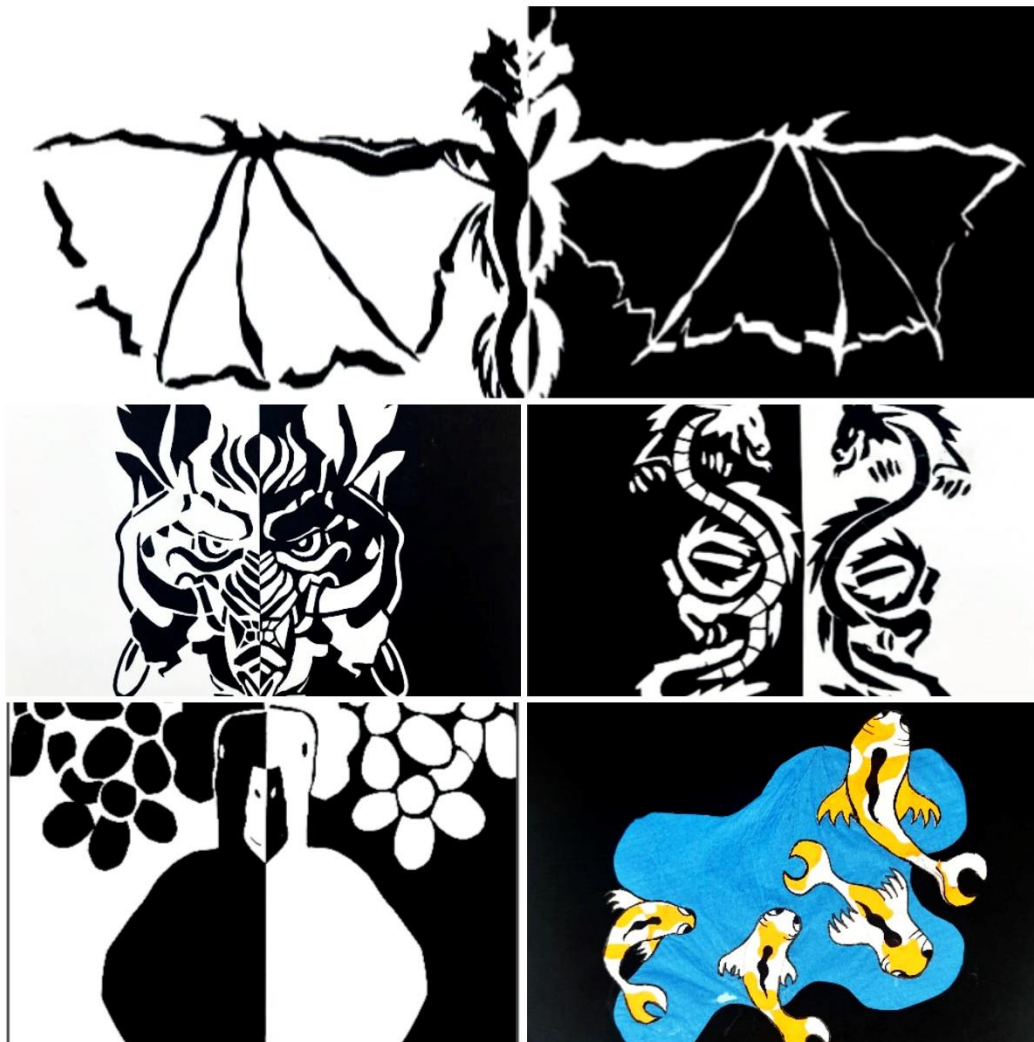
Kennedy Winter Concert II

This week, our choral and band ensembles captivated audiences at Kennedy's second night of the annual winter concert. The stage came alive with a mesmerizing synergy as talented musicians and vocalists showcased their dedication and skill. The grand finale was a breathtaking, featuring the harmonious collaboration of orchestra, band, and chorus, leaving everyone in awe. It was a testament to the collective talent and hard

work of our performers, creating a memorable and enchanting musical experience. The applause echoed the immense pride we feel for our artistic community, making the winter concert a resounding success and leaving lasting memories for all in attendance.



Design and Drawing for Production: Notan is a Japanese term which means "light and dark harmony." Artists would create "Notan studies" to explore different arrangements of light and dark (positive and negative) elements in a work of art, without having the distraction of other elements (color, texture and finer details). Students in Design and Drawing for Production created a detailed composition, using a cut paper collage technique. Students focus on balancing the positive and negative spaces; adhering to the concept of "light and dark harmony." Students chose either a symmetrical (radial or bilateral) or asymmetrical composition in their design.

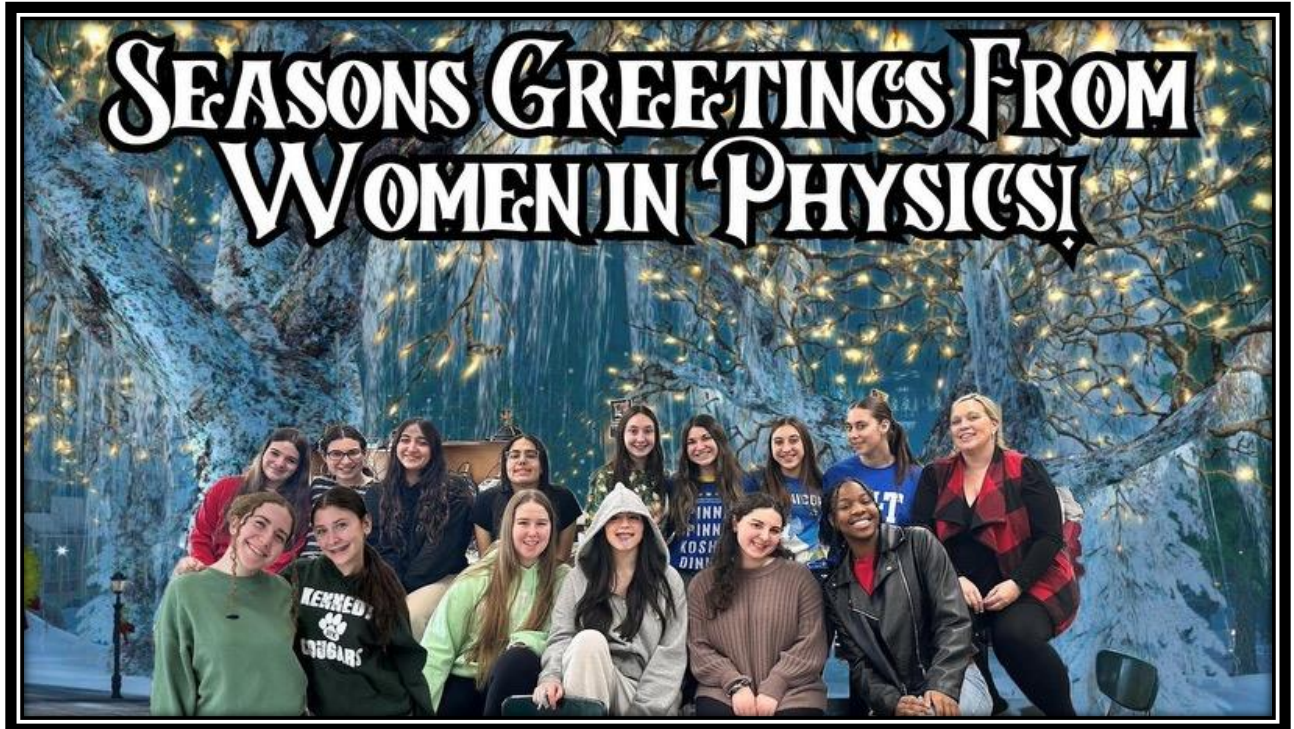


Art Club: This week, our talented high school Art Club students poured their creative spirits into collaborative masterpieces for Doors for a Cause. Inspired by the starry night, our club members worked to transform the photo room door into a snowy piece of art! Upstairs, on the sculpture room door, members created a Bob Ross inspired snowman scene. Students had much fun bringing joy to our hallways. We look forward to continuing to displaying their talents more in the new year!



Season's Greetings from Physics

Mrs. Ocampo's period 7 physics class would like to wish everyone a very Merry Holiday season and to remember that without air resistance snow flakes would fall at a rate of 9.81m/s^2 this holiday break!



KENNEDY PTA

Membership: Support our students and programs but joining the JFK High School PTA.

CLICK TO JOIN:

<https://jfkbellmorepta.memberhub.com/store?limit=21&live=true>

*But if you prefer to send a check or cash, just send it in an envelope with your name, your child's name, your email and phone number.

"Class of" GEAR:

Check out our new "Class of" line. Available for all classes!

Order Soon...Store closes on Dec 15th.

Text Leslie Cerverizzo at 516-860-5331 with any questions.

CLICK LINK TO ORDER: <https://www.4spiritwear.com/JFKCS.htm>



Spiritwear: Our spiritwear store is still open, offering both new images and items, customer favorites - plus money-saving bundles!

Email Kerry Griffin at kjgriffin06@gmail.com with any questions.

LINK TO ORDER: <https://bit.ly/49581vp>

Upcoming Important Dates:

12/25-1/1: Holiday Recess – School Closed

1/3: Board of Education Meeting at 7:30pm

1/11: Guidance Program for 11th grade

1/12: MLK Day of Service

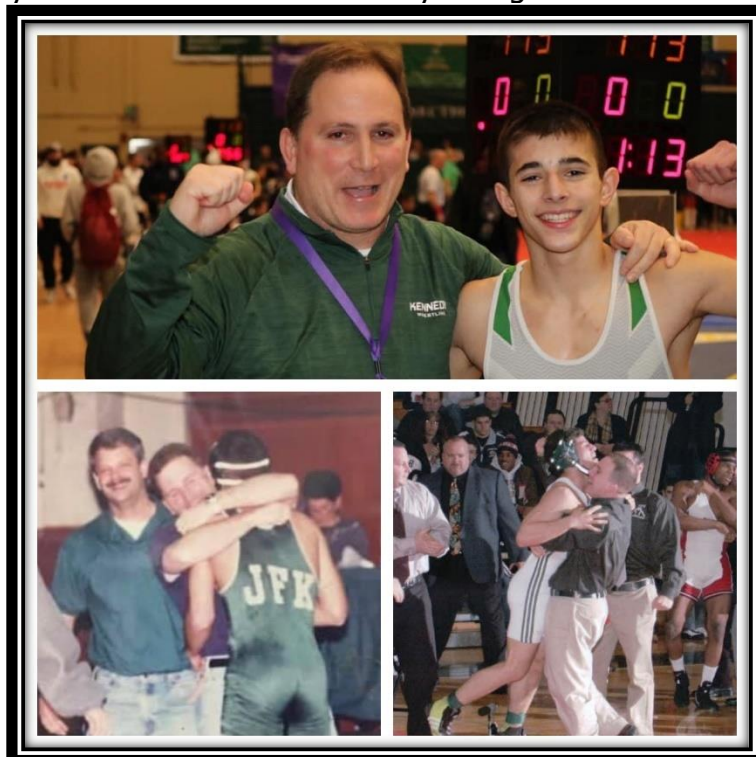


Cougar Athletics

DeGaetano Inducted into National Wrestling Hall of Fame

We are pleased to share that Head Wrestling Coach, **Brian DeGaetano**, will be receiving the national "Lifetime Service to Wrestling Award". This spring, Coach DeGaetano will be recognized for this achievement at the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Brian DeGaetano is in his 30th year of coaching wrestling at JFK and his 29th year as head coach. He is only the 3rd wrestling coach in the history of Kennedy High School and he is also the longest serving head coach in the history of the Bellmore-Merrick CHSD. He has the second most wins of all head wrestling coaches in Nassau County history. Of his many achievements, one of his greatest is preserving the rich history and tradition of Kennedy wrestling. His lifetime connection to all the wrestlers he coached and those that wrestled before his time has created a culture of pride and tradition that is unparalleled anywhere else in Nassau County. Congratulations Coach DeGaetano!



Boys' Varsity Wrestling

The Boys' Varsity Wrestling team is currently 6-1 in dual matches. Our boys beginning to kick the season into gear in dominating fashion.

Currently we have 4 wrestlers ranked in Nassau County:

Harlan Chugerman 6th

Peter Mikedis 4th

JJ Pizzirusso 2nd

Brandon Goldstein 2nd

Congrats to **Gabby Schechtman** for being selected as a top 20 girls wrestler on LI ! Gabby is currently ranked 1st on Long Island.

Two seniors were named to @NewsdayHSsports top 100 wrestlers of 23-24 season list. **Brandon Goldstein**, 285lbs: "He placed 3rd in the Nassau Division I at 285 pounds by earning a fall in 3:29"

JJ Pizzirusso, 138lbs: "He placed 5th in Nassau Division I at 132 pounds"

Exciting news for Bellmore-JFK wrestling!

Coach DeGaetano and **Coach Barros** received the news that they will both be inducted into The National Wrestling Hall of Fame for Lifetime Service on Saturday April 13th at The Melville Marriott on Long Island. **Coach DeGaetano** is truly humbled by this honor and wants to thank everyone for the overwhelming support you have shown him for the last 30 years. For **Coach Barros**, this is a long overdue honor! Now entering his 52 year of coaching, **Pete Barros** has coached in Harborfields school district, Half Hollow Hills school district (PE teacher /coach for 30 years), South Huntington school district, Syosset school district, and most recently with JFK since 2016. **Coach Barros** has coached numerous state and county champions along with many championship teams! He has also been a longtime wrestling official. The Kennedy School Community is proud for our coaches to receive this well-deserved honor for their dedication and desire to have our student athletes succeed.





Boys' Varsity Baseball: We are excited to announce that the JFK Baseball Program will be volunteering and running clinics with the Merrick Bellmore Little League at Kennedy High School for the 6th consecutive year!

These clinics are great time for all involved. We are incredibly proud of the fact that many of the student athletes from 3,4 and 5 years ago attended these clinics and are now successful student-athletes here at Kennedy, and in the BMCHSD, today. If you know of any prospective baseball/softball players in the community interested in attending - please spread the word!

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Little League on January 14th, 2024

Link to register can be found at www.merrickbellmorelittleleague.org



**Merrick-Bellmore Little league and the Kennedy Cougars
Baseball and Softball clinic**

Your child is invited to attend our 2024 Winter Clinic at John F. Kennedy High School. The clinic will be run by Kennedy Varsity Baseball Coach Michael Gattus and his staff, college level softball instruction as well as current and former college and high school players. We're excited to continue our partnership; it will provide the children in our community with an opportunity to develop the necessary skills to gain confidence and achieve greater success while playing the game they love!

We will be holding clinics on Sundays, January 14th, January 21st, February 4th and February 11th



Clinic times are as follows:

8:00am -9:00am Ages 4,5,6
9:00am -10:00 am Ages 7, 8, 9
10:00am -11:00 am Ages 10, 11,12



Please use the following link to **register** your child:

<http://www.merrickbellmorelittleleague.org>

If you have any questions please contact us at:

info@merrickbellmorelittleleague.org



****PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD BRING A GLOVE, BAT & A HELMET****

Disclaimer: This program is not operated by the Merrick School District. Distribution of the flyer is for informational purposes.



JV Cheerleading

All smiles for JV Cheer after winning at our home competition this past Saturday! The cougars will be back, competing next on January 6th at North Shore High School!



Girls' Varsity Basketball

The Girls' Varsity Basketball team lost a tight one to Division High School on Thursday night. **Ashley St Surin** had 16 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Cougars, while **Jolie Yablon** and **Jordi Wohleben** contributed 9 a piece. The girls take on Plainview JFK over the break for a non-league contest 12/28 at noon!



Girls' Varsity Bowling

The girl's bowling team is having an amazing season so far. The girls are undefeated in their conference. **Julie Kolinsky** has made a great addition to our Varsity roster. We are looking forward to continued success in the New Year.

Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey

The Boys' Varsity Ice hockey team finishes the calendar year with an 8 game winning streak winning 2 games this past week.

The team looks to continue the streak in the new year. Their first game in the New Year will be Jan 8th. The team would like to thank all the students for coming out to the rink and supporting the team.

Boys' Varsity Basketball

The JFK Cougars Basketball team is now 2-2 in league play heading into December break. Thank you to all of our students and JFK families who came down to support our guys over the past month. Below are highlights from last Friday night's league win vs Hewlett.

Bellmore JFK Varsity Basketball defeated Hewlett HS Friday night by a score of 52-43. After Hewlett cut the JFK lead to 43-41 on a 3 FG with 3:00 minutes remaining, **Leo Ferry** responded with three of his game-high 29 points to hold off the bulldogs. Junior **Jake Wexler** responded late in the 4th quarter with a clutch 3 pointer to extend the Cougar lead to 49-43. Ferry hit 7 3FG's on the evening. **Wexler** scored the Cougars' final six points and concluded the game with 8 points. **Ari Salama** (8 pts 6 rebounds), **Michael Mezzone** (6 pts and 12 rebounds) and **Zach Cohen** (1 pt and 8 assists) also filled up the stat sheet for JFK. **Lucas Linn** (8 rebounds), **Alex Leiderman** (5 rebounds), **Jeremy Bergida** (3 rebounds) and **Luca Kaplan** (2 rebounds) cleaned up the boards throughout the game and alongside strong guard play from Freshman **Aaron Jacobs** the Cougars were able to secure the League Victory last Friday Night.

We will have two more games over break next week:

Home vs Carey at 11 am on Wednesday December 27th

Home vs Hicksville at Noon Thursday, December 28th



Have a wonderful holiday recess!

Sincerely,

Gerard Owenburg, *Principal*

"Make Every Moment Count"