

COPIAGUE *Connections*

A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN



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Copiague Spirit Soars DURING HOMECOMING

Throughout the week leading up to the homecoming celebration on Sept. 24, Eagle pride was at an all-time high as students, faculty and administrators geared up for the big game with spirit week and a pep rally.

The District came together at Walter G. O'Connell Copiague High School to celebrate homecoming with festivities, including a parade, fair, football game and Hall of Achievement induction ceremony.

The day's events kicked off with a spirited community parade led by the Board of Education, administration and community leaders, followed by a ceremony on the football field where cheerleaders and the step team performed after the homecoming queen and king, Diana Lopez and Rigaud Destime, were introduced.

The afternoon continued as the varsity football team took

on Centereach High School. Despite their best efforts, the Eagles were unable to defeat the Cougars. Attendees were treated to rousing performances during the halftime show, which included the school's marching band, cheerleaders and step team.

Capping off the events was the annual Hall of Achievement induction ceremony. This year, the District inducted three new members into the Hall - Jim Konen (Class of 1984), Dr. Leslie Marino (Class of 1998) and Craig Stadelman (Class of 1977).

From spirit week to the football game to the Hall of Achievement inductions, Copiague's homecoming celebrations proved a great way for the community to come together and show their school spirit.



As the World Turns

New Courses, Technology Enhance Social Studies Curriculum

Over the last few years, the District has been enhancing its already robust social studies curriculum with the introduction of new courses. These offerings, coupled with integrating technology, have resulted in a dramatic increase in test scores at the high school level and many added opportunities for collaboration between the middle school and high school.

At the elementary level, social studies courses are woven into the curriculum through interdisciplinary lessons. For example, at Susan E. Wiley Elementary School, each hallway is

designated a continent and is used as an interactive project-based area with bulletin boards and display cases providing information regarding the continent.

The high school and middle school social studies departments meet regularly to bridge the lessons between the two schools and present a cohesive offering to students. Three new electives have been added to the curriculum – History Through Film, Criminal Justice (based on a schoolwide survey of courses that students were interested in), and Facing History and Ourselves (see more inside Connections).

Not only are new electives being added every year,

there is also a significant increase in student test

scores on Regents and Advanced Placement exams. More than 84 percent of students from Copiague who took the U.S. History and Government Regents in June passed, an increase of more than 10 percent from the previous year, and the Global History and Geography Regents saw an 8.9 percent increase. Additionally, AP scores from Copiague students land well

above the national average. For example, 89.5 percent of students passed the AP World History exam last year, well above the national average of 51.2 percent.

With the like-minded goal of increasing student achievement across the board, teachers throughout the district are engaging in more professional development and helping students to better prepare for exams with more time for study and review.



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As the World Turns

*New Courses, Technology
Enhance Social Studies
Curriculum*

"The class makes people comfortable with talking about certain topics. Our opinions are heard through debates, journal writing and fun methods. The class comes together to understand and learn how things in history could be compared to our society and lives today." Abby Vargas, 9th Grade

Collaborative Project:

Students in the AP Government and Politics class are taking part in the School Election Project 2016 with a sister school in Brandenburg, Germany. In the weeks leading up to the election, the students learn about the issues and procedures that decide the outcome of the vote. The students have a Town Hall discussion board that enables them to pose political questions to their German counterparts. "The students in the class have responded to the German students and have also written their own questions," said Michelle Penyy, high school social studies chairperson. "They were surprised that the political ideas of the European students were unlike their own, but were equally astonished at how similarly the politicians are portrayed by the media in both nations based on some information shared by German students. Our students were extremely excited to be the first class in our district to participate in this online exchange."

Facing History and Ourselves:

New to the high school this year is the Facing History and Ourselves elective. The class is a national curriculum program that aims to foster students' ethical and moral development through the use of historic case studies. With a focus on the Holocaust and other human rights violations, the course challenges students to partake in ethical decision-making in their own lives. "I love this class because it's teaching social studies content in a way that shows why it matters to students' own lives," Ms. Penyy said. "It is also helping them to become more empathetic by expanding their thinking skills. This class brings students from every grade together for one common goal."

"I believe it is important to learn about the facts of history and [history's] impact on people then and now. This allows us to understand history in a way that can't be done in a traditional history class, and I really love having a class where I'm able to do just that." Sophia Hall, 12th Grade

Trending Technology:

Middle school students work on one-to-one Chromebooks in class and are integrating Google Apps into their educational experiences. Through Google Classroom, they can complete assignments, work on group projects, collaborate with class peers and teachers, and turn in homework online. "This extends the classroom beyond the walls of the school and enables learning to occur anytime, anywhere," said Stephen Cooney, middle school social studies teacher. "As long as they have an internet connection, they can access their work and assignments on any device. Technology continues to evolve and is a huge part of our students' lives and futures. In order to stay relevant and reach the students of today, educators must stay well-informed and utilize the power of technology in the classroom and beyond."

Middle School Adventures:

Adventures in Social Studies is a new elective offered at the middle school for seventh- and eighth-graders using Google Classroom. The inspiration for the elective, according to Michael Ferretti, assistant principal and social studies chairperson at the middle school, was to make learning geography fun. "We kept all the rigor of a geography course, but we removed all the pressure," he said. The course is a project-based elective where students can have fun with geography and history – for example, exploring ancient Rome and Egypt, but not necessarily from text.