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Harborfields HIGHLIGHTS

The Official News Source of Harborfields Central School District

SETTING YEARLY GOALS = Future Student Success

At the beginning of each school year, the Harborfields Central School District administration and Board of Education work together to establish a number of goals in different areas of academic focus. Providing a world-class education for the children of our community is something the district takes pride in, and each year we look for new ways to do so.

For the 2018-19 school year, the district focused, in particular, on the areas of innovation and curriculum.

INNOVATION

Harborfields has been ranked the No. 1 best district in Suffolk County by Niche.com, and this ranking is not without merit. We have some of the most dedicated teachers and administrators who constantly seek innovative ways to afford our students a successful future. The word “innovation” may seem overused, but that’s because it’s something that every organization and industry is seeking – original,

creative and advanced ideas to keep up with the rapid pace at which our world is evolving.

To do this, we have sought to more fully maximize the use of technology to enhance the education and overall experience our students receive. As a result of the focus on innovation, we will wrap up the first full 1:1 Chromebook program at Harborfields High School.

Additionally, students in K-8 classrooms have increased access to Chromebooks and other devices as needed.

To use these devices in the most beneficial ways possible, our dedicated teachers have taken advantage of professional development opportunities to learn about the latest pedagogical strategies to leverage technology in the learning process.

“The highlight of our professional development program has been allowing our highly qualified teachers to provide in-service courses for their colleagues,” said Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Administration Dr. Rory Manning.

Shining STUDENTS



Harborfields High School senior Albert Zhang, named a National Merit semifinalist this past fall, was named a finalist in the program. This prestigious program seeks to honor the nation’s scholastic champions and to encourage the pursuit of excellence in academics. Being named a finalist placed Albert in the top 1% of students nationwide.



Four students from Oldfield Middle School were selected as local honorees of the Prudential Spirit of Community Award. Together, the girls wrote an essay explaining how they accomplished raising \$1,185 for pediatric cancer research by going door to door in the community.



HHS student Cameron Best, a sophomore highly involved in the school’s robotics program, was recently selected as a finalist for the FIRST Dean’s Award. FIRST seeks to inspire students’ interest in science and

technology and awards students who exhibit the highest level of skill, dedication and leadership.



HHS junior Bryan Hyun was selected by EarthEcho International, a nonprofit organization that seeks to equip the nation’s youth with resources to

ensure a sustainable future, as a local Water Challenge Ambassador. Only 20 students nationwide were selected to participate in this initiative.



Learning in Action



Washington Drive was visited by author and illustrator Patricia Polacco earlier this spring. Ms. Polacco captivated students with stories of her life and how they affected her writing, brought in elements of her books and inspired children to tell their own stories.



Thomas J. Labey students put their math knowledge to the test by competing in tournament-styled math games at Math 24 Night. Groups of four students faced off against each other, using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division to find a solution of 24 for each challenge.



Social studies students at OMS recently re-enacted the Supreme Court Marbury vs. Madison case in class. Students took on judge, jury, defendant and plaintiff roles, presenting strong arguments, questions and debates.



The HHS Hydrofluoric Robotics team.

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A Message from the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Harborfields Community,

I would like to thank all residents who participated in the 2019-20 budget vote. Thank you for the continued support of the spending plan, which will allow us to continue to enrich the academic program offered to students, as well as provide for a greater emphasis on social-emotional learning and mental health awareness.

As you are probably aware, the Board and administration are preparing to hold a bond referendum vote in the fall to address aging infrastructure in the school buildings. While the district's 2015 bond included repairs/replacement to some infrastructure in the district, the majority of the work included in that proposal centered on enhancing instructional spaces. A number of infrastructure issues still exist, including boiler replacements, HVAC upgrades, and sidewalk and paving repairs to name a few. We also look forward to converting our library spaces into more dynamic work areas for both independent and group study, as well as converting one field at the high school to synthetic turf.

It is important to note that the district has existing debt from the bond approved in 2000 for the construction of Washington Drive Primary School. This debt will soon be retiring. Even if the community approves the potential new bond this fall, district residents will see a decrease in its total debt service. For the average homeowner, this means a reduction of approximately \$150 with respect to the bond a year in school taxes.

For detailed presentations of all bond information presented to date, please visit the district's website, www.harborfieldscsd.net. The district's next bond presentation will be held on Wednesday, June 19 at 7:45 p.m. at Oldfield Middle School. We invite all residents to attend.

As we enter the final month of the 2018-19 school year, I know it is a busy time for all families, and I thank you for your continued participation and active involvement in our district. I look forward to seeing you at one of the many events planned within our schools.

Sincerely,
Dr. Francesco Ianni
Superintendent of Schools

SETTING YEARLY GOALS = Future Student Success

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"Not only are our teachers eager to learn from their colleagues, but to teach as well."

In addition to having technology more readily available in the classrooms, programs have been expanded to enable students to have hands-on experience in areas that require heavy use of technology. The high school's science research and robotics programs, as well as the use of the coding platform KidOYO, in particular, are shining examples of this.

In the past two years, the robotics club has expanded from one to three teams, and has made it impressively far in both Long Island and regional competitions. To be successful in these areas, having the tools available to students is very important for their growth in understanding engineering. For example, students can use the 3D printer and a custom computer program to build parts for their robots.

"Our students are passionate about robotics, so much so that they've begun taking local elementary and middle school robotics teams under their wings," said club adviser Michael Pinto. "But if our school didn't have the materials and environment readily available, our students may never have even considered trying robotics."

Since its implementation, the science research program has been growing steadily, with over 60 students enrolled in the Advanced Science Research Independent Study classes and over 50 freshmen enrolled in the Introduction to Science Research classes. Students are showing a hunger to explore science at their own capacity and have been performing extraordinarily well.

For instance, one student has been selected for Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory's Partners

for the Future Program, a highly exclusive program that selects only 15 high school students across Long Island; seven students are submitting projects to the NYS Science and Engineering Fair, the most HHS has ever sent; and students are volunteering for the Long Island Sound Study, actively participating in beach cleanups, horseshoe crab tagging, water quality testing and harvesting of invasive species.

At the elementary and middle school level, students have exceeded district expectations in using the newly implemented and innovative programming platform KidOYO. With the support of our teachers, our students continue to demonstrate that they possess all of the requisite skills of true 21st-century learners.

"Utilizing KidOYO in the classroom allows us to utilize innovation, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving," said Thomas J. Lahey teacher Jennifer Washington. "And it's been a rewarding experience to watch our students rise to the occasion."

Cumulatively, students have earned upwards of 6,500 badges through the program, which are micro-credentials demonstrating their proficiency in languages such as C++, Java, Python, Ruby, and Scratch – and students are invested and thriving in these areas. In April, a team of students from OMS participated in an islandwide "Hackathon," where students worked together to complete coding challenges against other schools, and came in fourth place.

CURRICULUM

Along with the way instruction is delivered, instruction content needs to evolve with the times as well. As a result of the new state Science Learning Standards, the district has adopted new science

curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels. Over the past few years, teachers throughout the district have been working together to ensure that students are well prepared for success with the new standards. Additionally, the idea that an important role of science education is to prepare students with sufficient core knowledge so that they can acquire additional information on their own as they need it has been emphasized.

However, to keep students engaged in an increasingly distracted world, teachers have been dutifully working to create more opportunities for students to experiment with what they're learning in a hands-on capacity.

Norreen Paccione, a teacher at Thomas J. Lahey, is one such teacher who has been striving to provide these opportunities for her students. Recently, she challenged her students to build weatherproof structures, but gave them no further direction. With the knowledge they already had, students were challenged to work together to build structures that could withstand both a hurricane and a tornado. Each structure then went through simulated hurricane conditions, which consisted of large cups of water being dumped overtop. If the structures' foundation didn't flood, it passed the first test. Next, a giant leaf blower was turned on the structure to test whether it could withstand a tornado. Most of the groups passed both tests, and had a blast doing it, too.

"Students respond positively when they're encouraged to take control of

their learning," Ms. Paccione said, "and we try to teach in a way that provides students with continuous hands-on opportunities."

Along with reviewing and making changes to science curriculum, changes to the elementary-level literacy programs have been made to engage all students as well. At Washington Drive, a research-based program called Foundations has been implemented in grades K-2. Since implementation and staff training, readers' comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics have grown.

"The implementation of Foundations into the primary ELA curriculum has supported the groundwork for lifelong literacy," said WD Assistant Principal Kathryn McNally.

At Thomas J. Lahey, Fountas & Pinnell has been implemented to support the third through fifth grade Journey's Reading Program. This program provides teachers with the tools to observe and quantify reading behaviors in their students, which helps them develop individualized reading programs. This year, students were benchmarked at least one time in the fall and one time in the spring. Teachers were able to observe and quantify student reading behaviors and engage students in comprehension conversations that go beyond retelling. In addition, classroom teachers made informed decisions that connected assessment to responsive teaching. During small-group instruction, teachers supported their learners at their instructional level, and students were then



Students test their structure's ability to withstand a hurricane.



WDPS students take turns reading their favorite books aloud.

able to apply these strategies during independent reading.

Another important aspect of changing curriculum is giving students real-life situations in which they can apply what they've learned. Recently, HHS was approved for career and technical education certification, which authorizes Harborfields' teachers to teach a specific career program. The program is called Harborfields Business and Entrepreneurship Academy and has been approved by New York State as a pathway for students to explore careers in business, marketing and entrepreneurship. Students

enrolled in this program can earn a special distinction on their diplomas, as well as earn a professional industry certification. Students can earn college credits, enroll in internships and participate in job shadow days, all of which help prepare them for their futures beyond Harborfields High School.

Thanks to the forward thinking, hard work and dedication of the Harborfields administration, faculty and Board, we are setting our students up for future success – both within the district and beyond!

"Students respond positively when they're encouraged to take control of their learning and we try to teach in a way that provides students with continuous hands-on opportunities."

– TJJ teacher Noreen Paccione

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