



# Outreach

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## Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified School

Jackson Avenue School has been recognized as a Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified School. Common Sense Education is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids and families thrive in a world of digital media and technology.

In order to be considered, Jackson Avenue had to demonstrate its commitment to taking a whole-community approach to preparing its students to use the immense power of digital media to explore, create, connect and learn, while limiting the perils that exist in the online realm, such as plagiarism, loss of privacy and cyberbullying.

"We applaud the faculty

and staff of Jackson Avenue for embracing digital citizenship as an important part of their students' education," said Rebecca Randall, vice president of education programs for Common Sense Education. "Mineola School District deserves high praise for giving its students the foundational skills they need to compete and succeed in the 21st-Century workplace and participate ethically in society at large."

Jackson Avenue has been using Common Sense Education's innovative and research-based digital citizenship resources, which were created in collaboration with Dr. Howard Gardner

of the GoodPlay Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The resources teach students, educators and parents tangible skills related to Internet safety, protecting online reputations and personal privacy, managing online relationships and respecting creative copyright.

"We're honored to be recognized as a Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified School," said Jackson Avenue Principal Dr. Janet Gonzalez. "By preparing our students to use technology safely and responsibly, we are providing them with unlimited opportunities to maximize and personalize their learning."



## Common Sense Certified Educator

Jennifer Dralle-Moreano, library media specialist at Jackson Avenue School, has been named a Digital Citizenship Certified Educator. To qualify for the designation, she had to complete a certain number of digital citizenship lessons with students, as well as lead discussions on its importance with fellow educators and parents. Her first year in the district, Mrs. Dralle-Moreano received the designation for her commitment to teaching young people how to be safe, responsible and respectable digital citizens.

Prior to joining Mineola, Mrs. Dralle-Moreano was a library media specialist at The Green Vale School in Old Brookville. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Buena Vista College in Iowa and a master's degree in library and information science from LIU Post.

## A Presidential Mention

**Mineola Union Free School District**  
121 Jackson Avenue  
Mineola, New York 11501

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The district is proud to have been acknowledged by President Obama in his final State of the Union address. As you may know, the address announced a "computer science for all" initiative in which the president would like to make computer science curricula available to every American student. The remarkable work Mineola has done with technology received a direct mention from the White House and in the president's speech.

Mineola was listed among 25 districts that offer expanded computer science opportunities for students. It was also the only district in New York State to receive a mention.

The mention was made possible through the district's involvement in the League of Innovative Schools and Digital Promise, as well as a paragraph that Superintendent of Schools Michael P. Nagler submitted to the White House regarding the district's kidOYO platform and K-12 coding initiative.

"Our partnership with kidOYO is unique and I believe an exemplar to replicate," Dr. Nagler said. "Clearly, the White House agreed."

Before



# SMALLAB Learning

As the only school on Long Island with a SmallLab, Jackson Avenue students are being given a unique learning opportunity. The room, which Principal Dr. Janet Gonzalez saw in action while visiting schools in another state, embodies learning in the kinesthetic and collaborative sense.

Appearing as a plain room with darkened windows and a large whiteboard on the floor, when the lights go out and the program launches, SmallLab turns into a live, educational game show for the school's third- and fourth-grade students.

"Kids are absolutely in love with it," said Jacqueline Teemsma, who coordinates the room's usage. "It really fosters teamwork and collaboration while keeping students engaged at the highest levels."

Teachers sign up to utilize the space and then work with Ms. Teemsma on generating content for the game. Games are pre-loaded into the system, but teachers must supply the curriculum and content. Two to three students at a time can play, but they receive assistance from classmates who are waiting for their turn on the board. Students utilize a special wand to make selections and give answers on the board.

In addition to class purposes, the room is used for students to engage in educational games during days of indoor recess. Some of the many available games include geography, life cycles, story lines, color mixer and a fraction lab.

After



## iPads on Display

Jackson Avenue School hosted a special Apple event for interested area educators to witness the district's one-to-one iPad initiative in action. As an Apple Distinguished School, the event served to illustrate how the technology infrastructure supports innovation in teaching and learning. It featured administrators, teachers and students speaking about the endless possibilities that mobile learning provides.

Principal Dr. Janet Gonzalez led the introduction, in which she described Mineola's journey to becoming a one-to-one iPad learning environment.

"Our first goal when we were thinking about purchasing the iPads for students was that we wanted students to have fun at school. Learning should be fun," Dr. Gonzalez said. "Our second goal was that we wanted the devices to be personalized for each student in order to enable differentiated instruction. And our third goal was that we wanted students to take control of their learning, to see their progress, to know exactly where they stood at every moment."

Attendees then witnessed the technology being used in classrooms and interacted directly with the students and teachers to hear just how Apple technology is being integrated into instruction. The event closed with a panel discussion.

## 21st-Century Classrooms

Mineola High School has converted four of its classrooms into 21st-century classrooms. The transformation eliminates all standard desks and instead includes diamond-shaped tables, hi-top tables and couches – all with iPad charging stations.

The change came at the recommendation of the high school's 21st Century Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of 26 teachers from all grade levels and subjects. The committee's focus is to create an environment that fosters the four C's – collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and communication.

"We believe that sitting in rows is not necessarily the most conducive way to learn," said Principal Dr. Whittney Smith. "We designed the classroom to foster these



principles."

"I like it better," said eighth-grader Luis Goncalves. "It helps me focus more because it is a better environment." Victoria Godinho added, "The chairs are much more comfortable."

The four classrooms were chosen at random for conversion, and the teacher of each room was able to select their color scheme.

## Getting Stories Started



Second-graders at Meadow Drive School have been connecting to their curriculum in a fun and unique way. Utilizing Lego Education Story Starter sets, students are literally building stories that incorporate aspects such as community and types of narrative that they learned in class. Once their creation is complete, they use iPads to take pictures of their work and a story visualizer application to construct a written work that complements their design. Students then present their

finished projects to the class and make comparisons to what they have learned.

Pictured here, students use the Lego Story Starter sets to build urban and suburban communities. They are guided in these lessons by library media specialist Eileen Bellusci.





"I want to get smarter because I want to be like my big sister one day."  
Caitlin Powers,  
Kindergarten, Meadow

"It makes me get bigger and get a nice job when I get older."  
Aidan Paul,  
Grade 2, Hampton

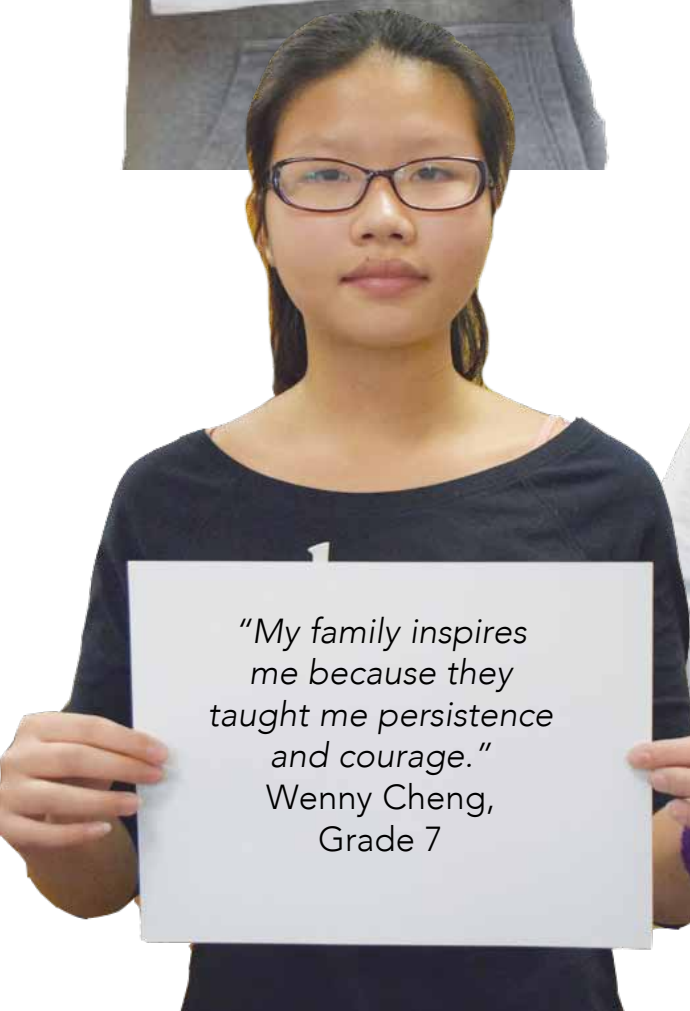
"Thinking. I'm happy and have fun at school."  
Luay Badad,  
Grade 1, Hampton

"I want to go to college and get a job."  
James Condon,  
Grade 2, Meadow



"I want to work as hard as I can to achieve my goals. I think learning will make me more successful."  
James Tighe,  
Grade 8

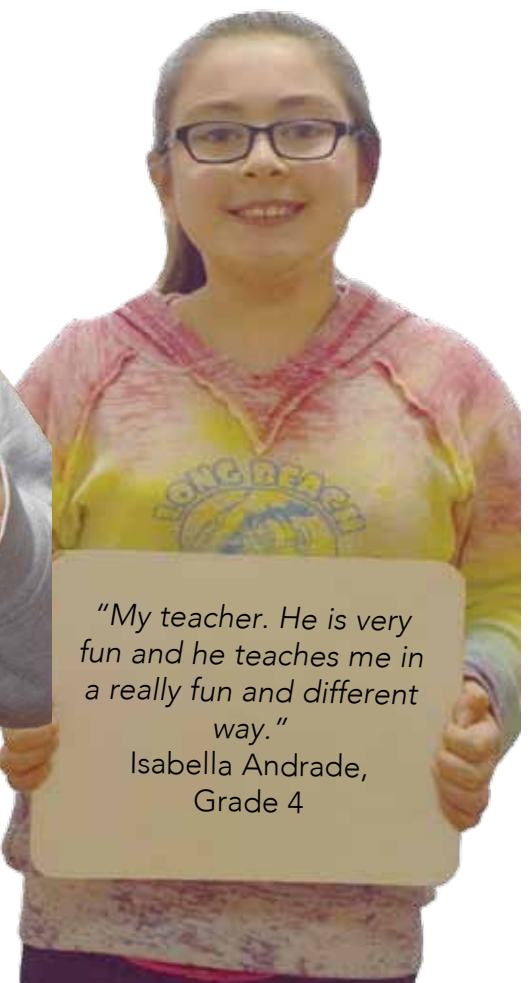
# What inspires **you** TO LEARN?



"My family inspires me because they taught me persistence and courage."  
Wenny Cheng,  
Grade 7



"It's fun to learn new things. Learning more and more every day gets me excited for classes."  
Howard Thaxter,  
Grade 11



"My teacher. He is very fun and he teaches me in a really fun and different way."  
Isabella Andrade,  
Grade 4



# Mission:

The mission of the Mineola Union Free School District is to inspire each student to be a **life-long learner**, pursue excellence, exhibit strength of character and contribute positively to a global society.

Wikipedia defines life-long learning as the “ongoing, voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also self-sustainability, rather than competitiveness and employability.” Wikipedia goes on to say that the concept of “life-long learning” was introduced in Denmark in 1971 and evolved into the term of “creating life-long learners” in the Temple City Unified School District’s mission statement in 1993. Here in Mineola, it was added to our mission statement in 2001 and reaffirmed in 2011. We believe that learning is something that happens every day, on an ongoing basis, both formally and informally at all ages.

Start

## Innovation Award for Robotics

The Mineola Motors<sup>2</sup> robotics team from Mineola Middle School won the Innovative Solutions award at the Long Island Lego Robotics Championship held at Longwood High School. The Mineola Motors<sup>2</sup> competed against 40 teams who qualified as the best of the best in Nassau and Suffolk counties. As part of the project, Mineola Middle School collected more than 9,000 pounds of e-waste and disposed of it without harming the environment. Participating in robotics reinforces problem-solving skills and teamwork, in addition to teaching the technical components of coding and programming.



## kidOYO & Digital Badging

In the last few months, the district has started utilizing kidOYO’s Web-based learning platform, YOclass. The “own your own” program is one that Superintendent Dr. Michael Nagler built specifically for the district with the company. Of utmost importance was for the platform to include coding opportunities for students, as well as to offer digital badging, where students can earn badges from their teachers for completing mission-related activities.

“It really encompasses all that we are trying to accomplish with students,” said Jackson Avenue’s library media specialist, Jennifer Dralle-Moreano. “The badges are a nice incentive for students. They reinforce the district’s mission and will stay with the students throughout their

education in a digital portfolio.”

To date, there are more than 100 badges that students can earn, and teachers are adding new ones every day. Students can also request a badge and submit an explanation and proof on why they deserve it.

*Pictured, students at Jackson Avenue are using YOclass’s coding program Scratch, which is from MIT, to create a longhouse game that coincides with their social studies curriculum.*



## Mastering the Musical

The musical productions staged by the district’s department of fine and performing arts are a stellar example of an interdisciplinary art that can resonate with a student for a lifetime. Not only do the productions allow practice for public speaking, they also teach students many technical aspects such as directing, lighting, sound engineering, set design, costume design, choreography and vocal performance.

Both the middle school Drama Club’s production of

Disney’s “The Lion King Jr.” and Mineola High School Drama Club’s production of “Pippin” received much praise for their Broadway-quality performances this year. At the middle school, the project was brought into the classrooms and asked students to take part in the costume design, artwork and set design as part of the standard sixth-grade curriculum. Between on- and off-stage work, more than 200 middle school students were involved in this year’s production.



## How is Mineola creating life-long learners?

- By fostering an inquiring mind and a sense of curiosity and questioning in students.
- By creating an awareness among students on the importance of knowledge.
- By helping students create a repertoire of learning skills, including knowledge of their own strengths and how to apply them.
- With teachers who are leading by example and are life-long learners themselves.

## QR Code

The district is now featuring videos on its website that highlight students fulfilling the mission. Scan here to see how some of our schools are contributing to our community.



## 21st-Century Professional Development

Life-long learning in Mineola applies not only to our mission for students, but for staff as well. The district puts a strong emphasis on offering and encouraging professional development for its teachers and staff. These opportunities come in the form of attending workshops and/or conferences, and now, through personal online learning networks. These Web-based sources of professional development are for anyone looking to expand their knowledge in a field. Our educators are participating in EdChats, hashtag conversations on social media outlets and microblogs, and even creating personal learning networks. This constant interaction between educators across the globe ensures that our teachers are always empowered and embracing their own life-long learning.

Finish



# GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY: Senior to Senior Day

A tradition for more than 30 years, Mineola High School seniors recently hosted their annual Senior to Senior Day, where community senior citizens are invited into the school to be served lunch by members of the high school's senior class. Following the food and conversation, the groups meet up in the gym for musical performances and the opportunity to cross generations and dance together. Guests also enjoy a special production of the high school musical and can receive a guided tour of the school if they wish.



## Key to *Writing*

Four students from Mineola High School earned recognition in the 2016 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Each student independently submitted their work for consideration. The following were chosen as regional-level winners:

- Luqman Abdin (grade 12) – Gold Key Award in Flash Fiction for “Am I a Monster?”
- Sanskriti Bimal (grade 12) – Silver Key Award in Journalism for “Break the Cycle: Educate the Underprivileged Girl Child”
- Esther Lee (grade 12) – Silver Key Award in Poetry
- Difa Abdin (grade 11) – Honorable Mention in Flash Fiction for “The Growth”

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is the country's longest-running and most prestigious scholarship and recognition program for talented high school students. Gold Key Award winners will be considered for national recognition.

## Alliance *Award*

In addition, senior Sanskriti Bimal has been selected by the South Asian American Women's Alliance as the first-place award winner in the alliance's essay contest. She was chosen for the award based upon her essay, “Impact of Social Media on Cultural Diversity,” and will be awarded a plaque and \$500 prize at the SAAWA's annual gala in June.

## Environmental *Art*



Under the instruction of art teacher Jaclyn Manouvrier, each of the students at Hampton Street School assisted in the completion of a mural that was painted in the school's new wing. With the assistance of visiting artist

John Dinaro, the mural depicts a pollution-free environment where all living organisms are able to flourish harmoniously. The theme ties in to the student's lessons on the importance of environmentalism.

## Scientists at Symposium

Mineola High School students Katie Shi and Emily Skupp presented their research at the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium on Feb. 7. All high school students from the Long Island and NYC Metropolitan areas were eligible, but only the best papers were invited to participate in the symposium. Katie and Emily made a short presentation in front of a judging committee comprised of college faculty and practicing scientists and engineers. The judges will decide who will continue on to the National Symposium. Katie's work is titled “The Effect of Extremely Low Frequency Electromagnetic Fields on the Early Development of Danio Rerio” and Emily's project is on “Muscle Fatigue in High School Athletes.”





# Alumni Spotlight

## REBECCA MADSON, CLASS OF 2002

Rebecca “Becca” Madson, president of the Class of 2002, has always been a leader who thrives in education. A participant in extracurricular activities and member of many clubs during her time at Mineola High School, she credits this involvement to teaching her time management, leadership skills and the importance of working together. Her relationships with many of the advisors to these clubs also had a long-reaching impact on Becca.

Specifically, Becca remembers AP Biology teacher Diane Lynch, who was “one of the hardest teachers I ever had”; Mr. Cavalluzzo, who helped her write her graduation speech; Amy Kenton and Eileen Burke, who helped hone her writing skills; Mr. Castellano, who always talked about respect; and Mr. Russo, who taught her to drive.

“I think about my teachers a lot,” she said. “I liked my time in high school and learned so much

from my teachers that I wanted to pay it forward. These individuals helped me develop as a learner and taught me how to get the most out of every experience. You can really impact a person’s life in academia.”

Influenced by these high school instructors, Becca attended Boston College in the fall of 2002 with the intention of becoming a high school history teacher. She began student teaching in Boston Public Schools as a sophomore and, over the course of the year, realized that she enjoyed the teaching component and history, but did not like the two of them together.

“I didn’t feel like enough of an expert to teach history,” Becca said. “I just didn’t feel like it was the right fit for me.”

In her junior year, she switched her focus to becoming a higher education administrator, and in 2006, earned her Bachelor of Arts in Education in history and human development. Becca remained at Boston College and received her Master of Arts in higher education administration in the spring of 2008.

Similar to her time at MHS, Becca was very involved in extracurricular activities while in Boston. Besides student teaching, she tutored at a charter high school and was involved in a student advocacy

group. As part of the group, she listened to feedback from students across campus and made presentations to administrators on how to effect positive change.

“It had an impact on everyday life and put me in another leadership role,” she said of her extracurricular experiences at Boston. “In higher education, I can assist more students without one specific academic focus.”

Following graduation, she worked for one year at Massachusetts Institute of Technology doing programming and assisting international students. She then accepted a job offer at Washington University in St. Louis, where she advised undergraduate groups for three years. In these roles, Becca was constantly utilizing the skills she learned from her time in Mineola – leadership, time management, communication and collaboration. She was responsible for fostering student leadership skills, providing training to students, and ensuring all students got what they needed out of their college experience.

While in St. Louis, Becca met her husband, Robert Ockenfuss, who was a co-worker’s brother. Although she hadn’t planned to come back to New York, Robert was offered a position in New Jersey with the United States Golf Association and the pair decided to



move in 2012.

At that time, Becca accepted the position of associate director of academic affairs at Columbia Business School. She still holds this position and coaches graduate students in the MBA program. “I’m providing to my students what I got from my teachers at MHS: someone they can rely on, someone to walk them through a process, and someone who is happy to be a mentor. It truly feels like I am paying it forward.”

Becca and Rob married in November 2013. They reside in New Jersey with their dog, Benjamin Franklin. They like to travel and plan to go to Europe this year for a delayed honeymoon.

Becca’s mother still resides in Mineola, and her brother, Jeremy (Mineola High School Class of 2000), is married and works in government affairs in Washington, D.C.







Several student-athletes have been recognized for their accomplishments:

**Girls Basketball** – Meaghan McCaffery, All-County; Victoria Venus, All-Class

**Boys Basketball** – John McMahon, All-Conference

**Girls Bowling** – Marissa Buonincontro, All-County

**Boys Winter Track** – Andrew Ariza, All-County, 55-meter hurdles

**Wrestling** – Michael Bowen, All-County



The winter season for Mineola was highlighted by great games and outstanding athletic accomplishments. The boys bowling team, led by All-County performers Ryan Sellinger and Anthony Macchietto, rolled into the playoffs after winning their conference over perennial champ Sewanhaka. Daniel Mengler and Anthony Scibelli were also All-Conference for the Mustang bowling team. Anthony Macchietto achieved higher honors, as he qualified for the state tournament for the second year in a row.



This winter, Mineola hosted the first Challenger League basketball game. The Challenger League is a modified basketball league for students in the lifeskills program. The Mustang Challengers took on the Oceanside Sailors in a home game before a packed house. Coached by Mr. Joyce and Mrs. Hunter, the team excelled both offensively and defensively. Every player on the team was involved in the action and performed on the court like a champion.



This year's annual Reggie Carter Night basketball game was played in front of a large crowd of students, community members and alumni. As is the custom, members of the boys and girls basketball teams were selected to receive the Reggie Carter Memorial Award. Congratulations to Malory Donelan, Valencia Hurd and Rodney Lird on receiving this honor. All three students showed determination and pride in the program this year, as they practiced hard, supported their teammates and demonstrated good sportsmanship throughout the season.



Publication Coordinator: Danielle Lambert

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