



# Outreach

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## Top 25 Most Innovative DISTRICTS IN THE NATION

Due to its unconventional and innovative methods for engaging students and garnering achievement, Mineola Union Free School District has been selected as one of the Most Innovative School Districts in the United States. The title was earned for its creation of new norms for engaging and future-focused learning, based on a complete case study of the district by The School Superintendents Association and Successful Practices Network. Only 25 districts in the nation received this designation.

“At Mineola, thanks to the standards-aligned, purposeful adoption of universal technology, students truly own their learning,” the study cites. “The superintendent embodies a classic entrepreneurial mindset. He’s always on the lookout for people, ideas and programs that can be a resource to his students and staff.”

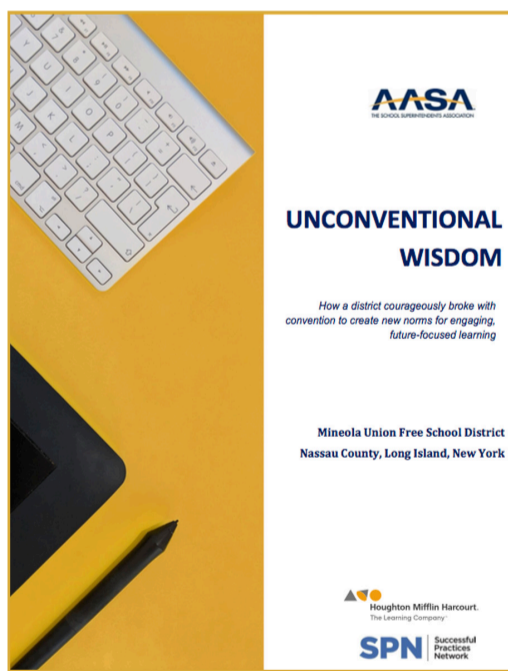
Superintendent of Schools Michael P. Nagler, Ed.D., took

the helm in Mineola in 2009, after serving in the district for 10 years as principal at Mineola High School and deputy superintendent. Since that time the district has undergone a reorganization in its structure, saving taxpayers millions of dollars; a curriculum overhaul and adoption of technology-driven resources for all students, including iPads for all and the introduction of a FabLab at the middle and high schools; and made a name for itself, earning national and international distinctions, such as having all five schools named as Apple Distinguished Schools and being named to the League of Innovative Schools.

“This award is truly a reflection of all the amazing administrators and teachers in this district who can take an idea and really run with it for the benefit of our students,” Dr. Nagler said. “They are the people who truly made my

vision come alive and who embrace our innovative culture to help our students thrive in ways that were previously unimaginable.”

In 2017, The School Superintendents Association and Successful Practices Network joined forces to search nationwide for districts which were challenging the status quo and to celebrate bold innovators in education. Twenty-five districts were chosen nationwide, and full documentation on the criteria for each district’s selection is included in a case study, available to all educators wanting to learn from the successes of these notable districts. Mineola’s case study can be viewed on the district’s website – [www.mineola.k12.ny.us](http://www.mineola.k12.ny.us) – under the current news.



**Mineola Union Free School District**  
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“Having an iPad and having constant access to a variety of apps has enabled me to expand my creativity and learning. And now with the new iPads I will be able to incorporate use of the Pencil into my art and schoolwork.”  
Darian Villanueva, Grade 7



# PERSISTENTLY PURSUING EXCELLENCE



## National Merit Semifinalist

Congratulations to Mineola High School senior Neilah Rustemi who has been named a semifinalist in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Competition. Neilah is one of 16,000 students nationwide, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors who qualify in the 64th annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

About 1.6 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2017 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

To become a finalist, Neilah submitted a detailed scholarship application, providing information about her academic record, participation in school and community activities, demonstrated leadership abilities, employment,



and her honors and awards received. Approximately 15,000 semifinalists are expected to advance to the finalist level, and in February they will be notified of this designation.

Merit Scholar designees are selected on the basis of their skills, accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.



## Top 25 of 2019

Mineola High School has announced the valedictorian, salutatorian and top 25 academic students for the Class of 2019. These students will lead the entire class of graduates to the stage at the Tilles Center to receive their diplomas in June.

Congratulations to the following students in ascending rank:

(Top Row, L-R) Loren Saldana, Alexa Schneider, Joseph Paldino, Miguel Velasquez, Tara Bolarte and Jonathan Mathew.

(Middle Row, L-R) Joana Marques, Angela Li, Gabriella Palumbo, Nikole Holowat, Christina Peitler, Tristan Gilbert, Hannah Kolsch, Genesis Torres, Maria Martins and Hye (Kelly) Koo.

(Bottom Row, L-R) Caitlin Doherty, Erin Miller, Michael Candela, Jenna Cox, Natalie Campanella, Michael Britt, Rhena (Tanya) Chuachingco, Salutatorian Alexa Buongiovanni and Valedictorian Neilah Rustemi.

## District Represented at International Conference

Jennifer Dralle-Moreano, the library media specialist at Jackson Avenue School, was the only educator from New York invited to speak at the e-Learning Korea 2018 international conference. Hosted by the Korea Education and Research Information Service, the three-day event was held



Sept. 13-15 in Seoul, South Korea, and showcased top products and practices in digital education from throughout the world. Ms. Dralle-Moreano was asked to speak about innovative learning practices as a guest for Digital Promise. Mineola Union Free School District has been an elite member of the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools since the 2014-15 school year.

“Being surrounded by these inspiring international educators who were all top in their field, who were all doing the same things we are doing here in Mineola, was so reaffirming that our students and teachers are really ahead of the curve here,” Ms. Dralle-Moreano said of the experience. “I am so grateful to be in a district that supports its teachers and students so steadfastly, that has provided me such a great opportunity for my professional advancement and trusted me to represent our exemplary practices in the global arena.”

Ms. Dralle-Moreano was one of only four educators who spoke in the group on “Transforming Education With Innovative Teachers.” She also participated in several Q&A panels throughout the conference, which was attended by policy makers,



administrators, stakeholders, Board members, students and parents.

During her four years with the district, Ms. Dralle-Moreano has been named a Digital Citizenship Certified Educator and a PBS Digital Innovator, and has assisted in developing the KidOYO Digital Badges and Coding platform. In 2016-2018, she assisted Jackson Avenue in becoming a Common Sense Digital Citizenship Certified School and has served as adviser to the school’s Lego League Club and TED-Ed Club.



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