



Outreach

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A STEAMY School Year

Called STEAM, the district has enhanced its STEM program to officially include the arts this year. Mineola is one of the only districts on Long Island to embrace the Next Generation Science Standards and has been giving students systematic exposure to STEAM-related professions across all grade levels. Here, we take a look at some of our youngest STEAMers and how they have actualized its components throughout the school year.

At Hampton Street and Meadow Drive schools, students held a combination Special Person's/STEAM Presentation Day, during which each class showcased one STEAM initiative from the year for special guest visitors.

At Hampton, these included projects like:

- Pre-K students using various age-appropriate puzzles to engage their critical thinking skills and learn visual recognition of certain animals/people in the community.
- Kindergartners building complete communities – schools, houses, fire/police stations – using Legos.
- First- and second-graders learning how seeds grow. They created and decorated their own pots, planted seeds and watched them grow over the course of several weeks.

At Meadow Drive:

- Students highlighted science research projects done as a PowerPoint.
- Students featured books they wrote on an iPad application.
- Special guests could read and view an original play that the class put together.
- Students exercised their journalism skills by interviewing staff members, making movies and writing articles for newspapers/magazine covers (research).

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

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Promotions FROM WITHIN

Two of Mineola's most familiar faces have been promoted to new positions, effective July 1.

Congratulations to Edward Escobar, who after serving as high school principal for the past 10 years, has been promoted to the position of assistant superintendent for human resources. Mr. Escobar has been an educator for 30 years, 14 of which he has been in the Mineola School District. His three sons are all graduates of the district.

Congratulations to Whitney Smith, Ed.D., who has taken the helm as principal of Mineola High School. Dr. Smith has been part of the Mineola School District for the past 12 of his 17 years as an educator. A dual master's degree holder and recent doctoral graduate, Dr. Smith previously served as the district's director of guidance and assistant principal of the middle school.



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.

Strength of Character

“Character was a term originally used for a mark impressed upon a coin. Nowadays, it is known as the sum of all attributes, such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty and loyalty, in a person. Character is perhaps the most important essence a person can possess, as it defines who a person is. To strengthen one’s character is to mold oneself into a productive person within one’s sphere of influence.” – wikiHow

Here in Mineola, our students all exhibit integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty and loyalty, among many other character traits. We strive to create well-balanced individuals who develop not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well; and strength of character is one area on which we focus our attention. Shared with you here are just a few examples of the strength of our students’ character.



Beautification Project for Eagle Scout

As part of his Eagle Scout project, Mineola High School sophomore Andrew Desiderio built planters at both Hampton Street and Meadow Drive schools. After several months of fundraising for the supplies, he and members of Mineola Troop 45 constructed the planters at each of the schools.

Andrew has been a member of the Boy Scouts since the fifth grade and currently serves as the assistant senior patrol leader in his troop. He chose to do this as his project because he wanted to do something that would benefit his community and the schools he attended.

Andrew is pictured with kindergartners in Patty Pearsall’s class at Hampton, who assisted in planting the flowers supplied through his project. Andrew spoke with them about why he did the project, and the kindergartners sang a special song to thank him. The planters are located near the new library.

Advocating for Education

High school junior Sanskriti Bimal, an avid writer and advocate, was recognized at the Long Island Press High School Journalism Awards Gala at Hofstra University. She was honored for her article, “Advocating Education for the Underprivileged Girl,” which was the first-place winner of the Andrea Rebello Award. Her work was selected from more than 1,600 entries across Long Island.

“I am honored to receive such a prestigious award and am grateful for the excellent light in which it places both me and my school,” Sanskriti said. “MHS has really shaped who I am today, and I would like to thank all the teachers and administrators who have shared their wisdom with me. My accomplishment would not have been possible without their support, encouragement and guidance.”

Sanskriti was also a winner in the 2015 Regional Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, taking home two Silver Key distinctions for her work.



Focusing on Friendship

As part of its ongoing character education program, the Hampton Cares Committee at Hampton Street School created a schoolwide project centered on the theme of friendship. The theme last year was anti-bullying, while the fall’s theme focused on being a bucket filler. With warmer weather and outdoor recess beginning again, the committee felt that a friendship focus would be best for this spring.

The students were encouraged to write a short response and draw a picture to the theme of “what a good friend means to you.” More than 100 students submitted an entry, each of which was displayed in the school’s main lobby for the remainder of the school year. Entries were categorized by friendship traits and featured slogans about the meaning of friendship.

In addition to the artwork, the committee had students read a daily announcement to reinforce the friendship theme.





Graduation

2015 ISSUE

Good Life for Graduates



During the district's 124th annual commencement ceremony on June 27 at the Tilles Center, graduates from Mineola High School celebrated their final moments together as the Class of 2015. The program included a welcome address from Class President Elizabeth Brown and musical performances of "The Dog Days Are Over" and "Good Life" from senior musicians. Each of the students crossed the stage to receive his or her diploma and a handshake from Principal Ed Escobar, who was officiating his last ceremony as high school principal.

"You can believe anything you want in life, as long as you believe in yourself. I believe we are all now fully prepared to begin a new chapter in our lives, and it will be very exciting to see what we become in the years ahead."

– Valedictorian Monika Dharia



"There is so much more to success than living the American dream. Success is making a positive impact on the lives of others by doing something you love...My challenge to you is to do something meaningful in order to acquire success. And oftentimes, doing something meaningful is doing something that has a positive impact on the lives of others."

– Salutatorian Michael Woytysiak



"We can put work into three categories – a job, a profession and a calling. A calling is when your profession and your life become intertwined and your work defines who you are. As you move on to the next phase in your life, I implore each of you to find your calling. Don't work for the sake of working. Follow your heart to work that calls you. Not only will you be happy, but you will positively affect the lives of all those you encounter as a result of doing something you love."

– Superintendent Dr. Michael P. Nagler



"As you look ahead, your opportunities are endless. Do what you love. Don't stand back and shy away from new experiences or ideas. Embrace the challenges you face. Appreciate all that life has to offer. Be conscious of the impact you will have on the lives of those around you. Don't mistake kindness for weakness. Treat people fairly, be compassionate and generous, and don't compromise your values."

– Principal Edward Escobar

Valedictorian

Monika Dharia

College: Duke University
Major: Environmental Engineering and Economics
Senior Activities: National Honor Society, National Science Honor Society, secretary of Mathletes, Science Bowl Team, Science Research Program, Brainstormers, Environmental Club, Yearbook Club, Athletes Helping Athletes, Student Service Center, varsity basketball team, varsity softball team, ambassador for Girl Scouts Troop 1460
Awards/Honors: Semifinalist in the 2015 National Intel Science Talent Search, AP Scholar with Distinction, National Merit Scholarship – Commended Student, second place at NYSSEF Andromeda (2014)
Describes Self: Friendly, funny and outgoing
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be helping the environment and using the engineering skills she learned in a business or law-related field



On the pursuit of excellence: “Mineola has helped me significantly in pursuing excellence. Through sports, I have learned how to be a team player and pursue success as a team. The student service center has helped me to achieve my goal of pursuing excellence while helping others. And lastly, the research department has allowed me to expand my horizons and explore my interests in science.”

Salutatorian

Michael Woytysiak

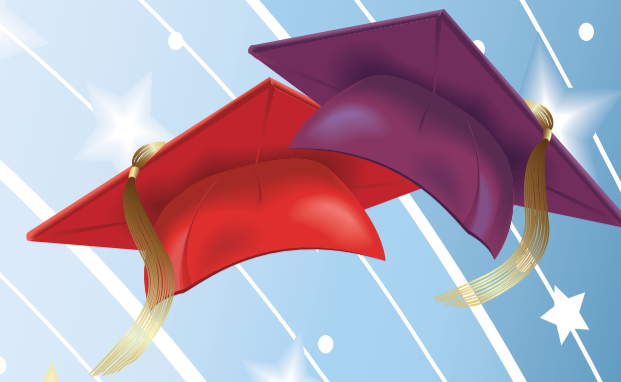
College: St. John’s University
Major: Actuarial Science
Senior Activities: President of Mathletes, National Honor Society, National Science Honor Society, Brainstormers, Peer Tutoring, Student Service Center, Computeers, coin collector and chess player
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Honor, National Merit Scholarship Program – Commended Student, Meritorious Award Winner at NYSSEF Andromeda competition, first place in the Presidential 100 Word Essay Contest for Nassau County (2014)
Describes Self: Conscientious, dependable and honest
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be doing work in the mathematics field



On the pursuit of excellence: “I was able to pursue excellence by giving 100 percent effort in all of my classes at MHS while participating fully in numerous extracurricular and service activities. I hope to continue to unlock my full potential by balancing my rigorous classes and enjoyable activities at St. John’s University in the fall.”

They're Tops: TOP 10

CLASS OF 2015's



CRAIG VANDE STOUWE

College: Johns Hopkins University
Major: Mathematics
Senior Activities: President of the Mock Trial Club, editor of the school newspaper, vice president of the Italian Club, vice president of Science Research, National Honor Society, Student Service Center, Board of Education student representative, Science Bowl Team, Brainstormers, Senior Patrol Leader, Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Honor
Describes Self: Determined, leader and conversationalist
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be using mathematical skills to conduct research and develop mathematical ideas, while balancing his passion for creative writing and a desire to be active in community affairs



On the pursuit of excellence: “Mineola has taught me to pursue excellence with humility, to serve before being served, to help before being helped, and to see everyone around you as an equally important member of your community. I’ve learned that when you treat another’s pursuit of excellence with just as much respect as yours, your journey becomes more fulfilling.”

ALISHA CHEUNG

College: Emory University
Major: Biology
Senior Activities: Newspaper Club, Creative Arts Club, soprano in Dynamics, Student Service Center
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Honor
Describes Self: Dependable, creative and ambitious
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be practicing as a registered dietician and have enough personal experience to write and publish books concerning all aspects of health and nutrition



On the pursuit of excellence: “This fall, I will be building on my interest in biology, which MHS has brought to my attention and has helped me cultivate. I hope to use my education to make a breakthrough in the field of health and biology.”

CHARLOTTE RING

College: University of Chicago
Major: Geology
Senior Activities: Co-president of Student Service Center, treasurer of Mathletes, co-editor of school newspaper, National Honor Society, National Science Honor Society, SPARC club, orchestra
Awards/Honors: Semifinalist in the 2015 National Intel Science Talent Search, AP Scholar with Honor, first place at NYSSEF Andromeda (2014)
Describes Self: Intelligent, creative and curious
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be researching as a scientist, receiving her doctorate and teaching college classes



On the pursuit of excellence: “Most of success is effort. Through everything in school and outside, perseverance and effort aid us more than talent or intellect.”

JENNIFER GODINHO

College: Fordham University
Major: Global Business/Pre-Law
Senior Activities: Vice president of Student Organization, vice president of Mock Trial, treasurer of orchestra, Student Service Center
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar
Describes Self: Outgoing, bubbly and determined
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to have a career that combines her passion for service with her leadership abilities



On the pursuit of excellence: “I intend to continue my pursuit of excellence by being one of only 19 freshmen who are part of the Global Business Honors Program at Fordham this fall. I will continue to make service one of the focuses of my life and will be applying for the six-year law program. In addition, I plan on joining the SMART Women in Business club, which focuses on helping women become equal in the business field.”

ANA GOMES

College: Mercy College
Major: Forensic Science
Senior Activities: Dynamics, Environmental Club, Student Service Center, Key Club, Fall Play, Drama Production, Latin Club, Brainstormers, Thespian Troupe, Portuguese Folklore Dance Group
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Honor
Describes Self: Smart, considerate and caring
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be working in a field that helps others



On the pursuit of excellence: “Mineola has given me support in all my years and the tools to help me in my future. I will take all that I have learned and apply it not only to my future education, but to the rest of my life.”

JOHN MURRAY

College: Rochester Institute of Technology
Major: Software Engineering
Senior Activities: Cross-Country/Track and Field/Winter Track
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Honor and National Merit – Commended Student
Describes Self: Smart, funny and compassionate
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be working hard in a career where he is challenged to help in the advancement of society



On the pursuit of excellence: “I hope to be able to continue my pursuit of excellence by doing well in my future classes, as well as using my newly developed skills to contribute to society in meaningful ways.”

EMILY ABRAMS

College: Macaulay Honors College (Queens College)
Major: Criminal Justice
Senior Activities: Secretary of Student Service Center, assistant editor of Newspaper Club, Science Club, Brainstormers, Leadership Council, Key Club, Chamber Ensemble, Tri-M Music Honor Society, junior volunteer at Winthrop-University Hospital, tech buddy at Mineola Memorial Library, junior lector at Our Lady of the Snow Church
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Honor
Describes Self: Industrious, brave and innovative
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be doing something she loves



On the pursuit of excellence: “Through MHS academics, intertwined with its Student Service Center, I have gained the lifelong mission to give back to those around me and make a true difference in any way that I can.”

PAMELA ALVAREZ

College: Stony Brook University
Major: Biochemistry
Senior Activities: President of Key Club, marching band, Winterguard, Computeers, Environmental Club, Art Club, Student Service Center – Leadership Council, National Honor Society, Science Honor Society and National Art Honor Society
Awards/Honors: AP Scholar with Distinction, National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholar, Quest Bridge Semifinalist
Describes Self: Optimistic, mature and benevolent
Ten Years from Now: Hopes to be a biomedical engineer, working with cutting-edge technology to expand horizons on understanding treatment of illnesses



On the pursuit of excellence: “Throughout my years at MHS, I have learned that determination is key in the pursuit of excellence. It does not come easy, and there never comes a day when you say to yourself ‘yes, I have obtained excellence.’ It is a continuous journey, and I am grateful to have learned that these past four years.”

Class of 2015

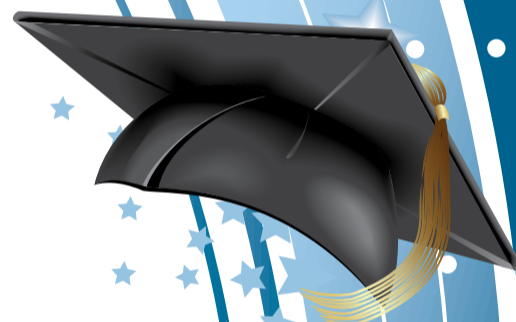


Robin Abraham
Emily Abrams
Alma Alvarenga
Pamela Alvarez
William Andrade
Ana Arango
Christopher Asam
Luigi Athan
Kevin Augustine
Erica Barron
Erin Beatty
Kelly Behan
Lauren Behan
Amalia Benavidez
Sandeep Bharti
Thomas Bonziglia
Nicole Boshans
Ryan Bradford
Patrick Brady
Christopher Brenes
Matthew Brodowski
Joshua Brooks
Elizabeth Brown
Nicholas Brown
John Buckley
Dennis Bustamante
Gregory Canell
Stephanie Cardinal
Julianna Caruso
Alisha Cheung
Kayla Ciccone
Philip Ciuffo
John Clancy
Kevin Coelho
Jenna Colletti
Michael Conte
Jacob Correia
Catherine Cunningham
Ilmi Dalipi
Brian Darmstadt
Neal Dave
Bryan DeCaldas
Ynoh DeGuzman
Douglas Demagistris
Matthew Demelas
Jack Dennehy

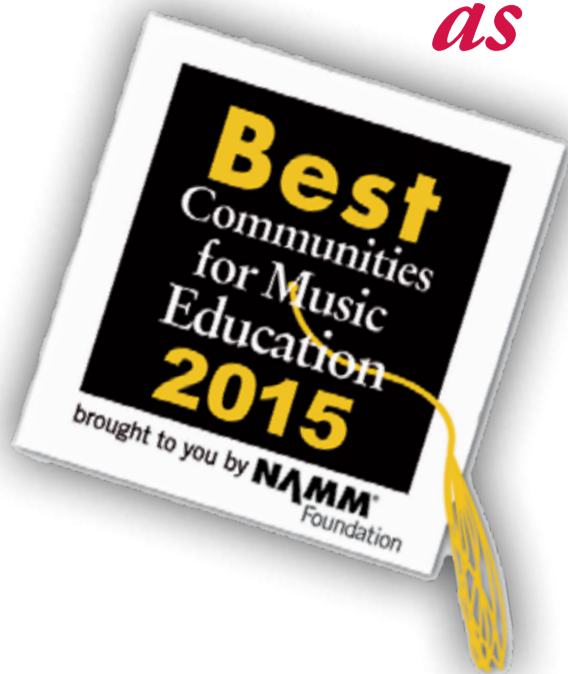
Robert Devlin
Monika Dharia
Ashish Dhiman
Aldrian Diaz
Kyle Dunleavy
Melissa Dunlop
Brandon Durham
Ryan Eccher
Jonathan Ekladios
Filipe Faria
Katherine Farrell
Thomas Farrell
Andrew Felipe
Daniel Ferreira
Sabrina Ferreri
Christoher Fischer
Eric Flores
Amanda Fontanez
Deborah Gabbay
Gerson Garay
Camila Garcia
James Gerstner
Steven Gessner
Andrew Giordano
Jennifer Godinho
Ana Gomes
Dylan Goodfellow
Brian Greenberg
Brian Greenfield
Eric Guardado
Taylor Harran
Edien Hincapie
Noelle Hines
Norbert Holowat
Ilder Jean
Corinne Joyce
Gabrielle Jurksas
Michael Kaestel
Rebecca Katinas
Parminder Kaur
Katie Keyes
Fawad Khan
Joshua Kompancaril
Karol Krynski
Matthew LaFaye
Arya Lahijani

Robert Lang
Tamiya Leggs
Nathaniel Levy
Rebecca Levy
Sera Levy
Shinjie Lim
Christopher Limazopoulos
Ricardo Lobo
Christopher Lockwood
Eric Lopez
Robert Luca
Leticia Machado
Stephanie Maisch
William Mannion
Mahtaab Marandi
Ronn Mathew
Peter McCormack
Emma McGeown
Cynthia Miranda
Cristina Mirao
Remonda Missha
Thomas Moran
Joao Mouta
Christopher Mueller
Kyle Mularchuk
Andrew Mulder
Casey Murray
John Murray
Asim Nehal
Vithushan Nimalan
Dominic Paggi
Chase Pagnani
Nicholas Paldino
Jenna Pareti
Samantha Pastore
Marcos Paz
Andrew Pereira
Miguel Pereira
Tomas Perez
Marilena Petrakos
Nicholas Pettinato
Michael Pflieger
Cristina Pinto
Sara Pires
Nicholas Poppe

Emily Pusey
Mayra Ramirez Portillo
Nadia Razick
Melanie Redondo
Charlotte Ring
James Rodriguez
Jeremy Romano
Selina Romero
Hannan Sahebghadam
Dhiviya Samuel
Samantha Santomauro
Anthony Sarno
Dylan Savarese
Jessica Schroeder
Scott Shannon
Gabriel Silva
Brian Smith
Mary Elizabeth Smith
Jenna Sofia
Rami Srour
Danielle Sullivan
Brian Tabares
Alexander Taveira
Victor Tineo Baez
Jackelyn Valverde
Craig Vande Stouwe
Anand Varghese
Nuvia Velasquez
Samantha Venus
Joslynnne Vernon
Sophia Villa
Tyler Villalona
Joseph Wales
Amy Wetzal
James Wiercinski
Jonathan Wilson
Madison Wolf
Michael Woytysiak
Allison Yarri
Yajaira Zambrano



7TH Year as



The district is thrilled to announce that for the seventh consecutive year, Mineola has been selected as one of the Best Communities for Music Education in America.

This designation was given to only 388 districts nationwide and 110 in New York State by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation, which helped to put together a survey that was completed by thousands of districts across the country. The districts were measured across curricular and programmatic criteria, as well as through public support of their music programs, and only the top-rated districts were chosen.

Participants in the survey answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, course offerings, extra and co-curricular opportunities, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and other relevant factors in their communities' music education programs.

Congratulations to the entire district music staff on this incredible honor.

Quarterfinalist for Music Educator Award

High school band director Marc Ratner has been chosen from among more than 4,500 teachers as a quarterfinalist for the Music Educator Award. Only 213 music teachers from across the United States have been selected as quarterfinalists for this award, which is presented by the Recording Academy and the GRAMMY Foundation.

The Music Educator Award was established to recognize current educators who have made a significant and lasting contribution to the field of music education and who demonstrate a commitment to the broader cause of maintaining music education in the schools.

Mr. Ratner has been a member of the Mineola music department for the past six years and was nominated for his exceptional work with the Life Skills class. He is known to use iPads to differentiate skill levels, use percussion instruments and mallets as forms of expression, and teach students to play the piano with color-coded keys. "While some of these students may struggle with communication, they tend to really enjoy expressing themselves through music, and it's nice to tap into that," he said.

In addition to the Life Skills class, he taught the ninth- and tenth-grade concert band, the jazz band, and the eleventh- and twelfth-grade concert band. Under his direction, the ninth- and tenth-grade band received a Gold rating at the NYSSMA festival this year.

Active in the music scene, Mr. Ratner has his own jazz trio — The Marc Ratner Jazz Trio — which frequently performs in the Mineola area. A resident of Mineola, he studied drumming at the University of Miami.



High school band director Marc Ratner has been chosen from among more than 4,500 teachers as a quarterfinalist for the Music Educator Award.

Finalists for the award will be announced in the fall, and one of the 10 finalists will be honored with the award during GRAMMY Week 2016 for his/her remarkable impact on students' lives. The district congratulates Mr. Ratner on making the quarterfinals for this honor and wishes him luck as he submits a video and additional information for his continued consideration for the award.

WEBINAR *with World Expert*

Third-graders in Janice Killelea's class had the unique opportunity of participating in a webinar hosted by Time for Kids. The magazine has been venturing into online content for kids and, as such, hosted its first informative and interactive webinar with chimpanzee expert, primatologist and anthropologist Dr. Jane Goodall.

Students learned about Dr. Goodall's

work prior to the webinar and were able to answer questions posed by Time for Kids webinar hosts. Dr. Goodall then streamed via webcam to thousands of students worldwide, spoke about the significance of her work, and answered some previously submitted questions.

"Anything that can get the students to interact or engage is a great tool," Ms. Killelea

said of the opportunity to be part of the free webinar. "It really drew the kids in, and they were excited to hear directly from Dr. Goodall."

Throughout the webinar, Ms. Killelea's students used their iPads to take notes and jot down any thoughts or questions. These notes were then used to create a keynote on the presentation.



The Mineola Athletic Program enjoyed great success throughout the 2014-2015 school year. Three teams advanced to the county finals in their respective sports. In the fall season, both the girls volleyball team and football team played in exciting championship games. In the spring season, it was the boys lacrosse team that took on Cold Spring Harbor in the finals. Although none of the three teams won the final game, their journey was highlighted in great moments. In addition, the boys soccer, boys bowling, girls bowling and softball teams all qualified for playoffs.

This year, we had 11 teams qualify as New York State Scholar-Athlete Teams with cumulative team averages above 90. This is truly a great accomplishment, as it is a clear statement that our athletes are students first. The success of our program is a direct reflection of the dedication and commitment of our coaches and student-athletes. Their dedication and hard work have contributed great memories and history to the Mineola athletic tradition.

On June 8, the Mineola Athletic Booster Club sponsored the 2015 Varsity Award Banquet to honor the accomplishments of our student-athletes. Through a tremendous amount of fundraising, the Booster Club paid for the dinners of all the athletes. The evening was highlighted by several special award presentations. To the right is a list of some special awards that student-athletes received at the Varsity Dinner and the Senior Award Breakfast.

The success of our program is a direct reflection of the dedication and commitment of our coaches and student-athletes.

Athlete of the Year

Male – James Gerstner
Female – Catherine Cunningham

Sportsmanship Awards

Andrew Pereira
Sara Pires

Senior Scholarships

Luigi Athan
Erica Barron
Erin Beatty
Douglas Demagistris
Ryan Eccher
Sabrina Ferreri
Christopher Fischer
Deborah Gabbay
Christopher Mueller
Anthony Sarno

The “Old Reliable” Award

John Clancy

Student-Athlete Leadership Award

John Clancy
James Gerstner

U.S. Army National Scholar-Athlete Award

Male - John Murray
Female - Monika Dharia

U.S. Marines Distinguished Athlete Award

Male - Brian Smith
Female - Catherine Cunningham

U.S. Navy Athletic Achievement Award

Male - Christopher Lockwood
Female - Samantha Venus

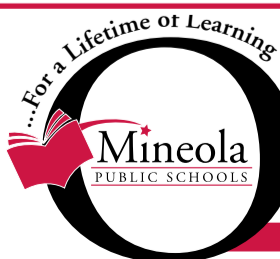
Mineola Mustang Athletics Outstanding Achievement Award

Steven Gessner
Eric Guardado
Robert Lang
Samantha Pastore
James Rodriguez
James Wiercinski

Senior All-County Award

Luigi Athan
John Clancy
Catherine Cunningham
Ryan Eccher
James Gerstner
Steven Gessner
Eric Guardado
Edien Hincapie
Christopher Lockwood
Peter McCormack
Christopher Mueller
John Murray
Jenna Pareti
Daniel Pardo
Samantha Pastore
Andrew Pereira
James Rodriguez
Anthony Sarno
Brian Smith
James Wiercinski

District calendars are slated for delivery in mid-August to the homes of all residents who have a child currently enrolled in the district. For those who do not have a child in the district, but would like a school calendar, please contact Edward Escobar at 237-2030 after Aug. 20.



Outreach

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Publication Coordinator: Danielle Lambert

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