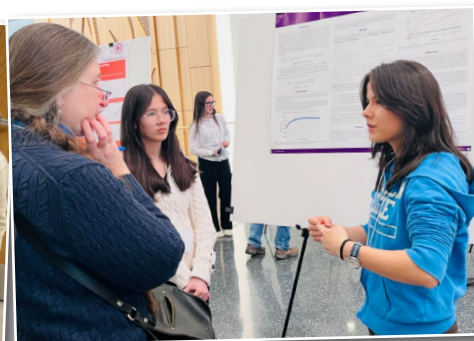


PORT
JEFFERSON
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

The Horizon

A Season of Great Success

Over the past few months, we have seen a number of great accomplishments at Port Jefferson Schools. From athletics to the fine arts and academia, our students, staff, and teachers have been excelling in so many areas. The following points are just a sample of the many great things our schools have been able to accomplish in recent months.



- The Earl L. Vandermeulen High School was identified as a 2024 Best STEM High School according to U.S. News & World Report. The school ranked 119 nationally and third on Long Island.
- The Port Jefferson Middle School was ranked the second-best middle school in Suffolk County, according to *U.S. News & World Report*.
- Our sports teams earned two County Championships and one Long Island championship.
- Five individual High School student athletes were County Champions and nine others qualified for the NYSPHSAA Championships.
- Our student-musicians and singers qualified for numerous county, regional, and statewide music festivals.
- The Port Jefferson UFSD was ranked for the 18 consecutive year as among the Best Communities in the Nation for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation.
- Edna Louise Spear Elementary fifth grade student and chess club member, Jonathan Kogan, competed in regional, state and national chess tournaments this year.
- Port Jefferson Middle School student Kieran Browne took part in the regional round of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- The Earl L. Vandermeulen High School earned the College Board's AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award for expanding young women's access to AP Computer Science Principles.
- Matthew Sefick, an English teacher at Earl L. Vandermeulen High School, was honored with the Harvard Club of Long Island Distinguished Teacher Award.
- Five students from Edna Louise Spear Elementary School are competing in the Brookhaven National Laboratory Science Fair after winning their grade level categories in the school's annual science fair.
- Both Port Jefferson Middle School and Earl L. Vandermeulen High School Science Olympiad teams qualified for state competitions.
- Earl L. Vandermeulen High School was the only on Long Island to have a 100 percent graduation rate for its class of 2023.
- Earl L. Vandermeulen High School student Avery Jean-Baptiste was honored at the Town of Brookhaven's 33rd Annual Black History Night.
- Two Earl L. Vandermeulen High School students earned a perfect score of 1600 on the SATs.
- Earl L. Vandermeulen High School senior Michelle Wu was named a National Merit Finalist for 2024.
- Earl L. Vandermeulen High School student Lia Donohue was inducted into the prestigious Congress of Future Medical Leaders.
- Earl L. Vandermeulen High School seniors Preston Biedenapp and Michelle Wu earned the Leadership Award from the Suffolk Zone.
- Physical education teacher Dinarae Camarda earned the Exercise & Sport Science Recognition Award from the Suffolk Zone.

Port Jefferson School Happenings

Earl L. Vandermeulen High School

This March, Earl L. Vandermeulen High School hosted its St. Baldrick's fundraiser, which demonstrated the school community's unwavering commitment in the fight against childhood cancer. This special event tasks communities with raising funds—and for a few brave volunteers, shaving their heads in solidarity—for cancer research. Through the collective efforts of students, teachers, and community members, the event raised over \$6,500 in donations. The assembly was a heartwarming display of solidarity and compassion, made particularly poignant by the presence of a Port Jefferson student and courageous cancer survivor. Their inspiring story served as a beacon of hope, reinforcing the importance of supporting research and initiatives to conquer pediatric cancer.



Port Jefferson Middle School

Sixth graders at Port Jefferson Middle School recently had a special, hands-on opportunity to learn about the work of our local police officers. As part of National Police Week, the students took a field trip to the Suffolk County Police Department headquarters. There, they toured the Police Museum, interacted with some of the department's emergency response vehicles, and learned about the different divisions and roles within the department. The



trip also included a live helicopter landing, mock rescues and pursuits, and K-9 demonstrations. The trip was a success, and gave the students an appreciation for the Suffolk County Police Department.

Edna Louise Spear Elementary School

This April, the students at Edna Louise Spear Elementary School had the opportunity to witness a rare celestial event: a solar eclipse. With much of New York in the path of this special phenomenon, the students were treated to educational lessons about how eclipses work, including the orbital mechanics of the earth, sun, and moon. To aid in witnessing the eclipse, the PTA donated special viewing glasses to allow the students to safely view the sun, in addition to projection viewers the students made in class. Shortly before dismissal, the entire building went outside to look at the start of the occultation as the moon began to pass in front of the sun.



The Arts Are Alive and Well in Port Jefferson

The Port Jefferson School District is proud to provide a robust and successful arts and music program for all of our students across all grade levels. Our music and art instructors are constantly striving to inspire our student-thespians, musicians, and artists to find and pursue their interests in the fine and performing arts.

Port Jefferson is a premiere institute for music learning. As evidenced by our District's recent recognition as a winner of the Best Communities for Music Education award by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), as well as participation in a number of local and regional music festivals—including hosting NYSSMA's Area 5 music festival in our own elementary school. We have an active Tri-M Music Honor Society chapter, which recently celebrated its induction ceremony, and on the stage, our student thespians performed a delightful production of *Seussical the Musical*.

Elsewhere in the arts, Edna Louise Spear Elementary School recently hosted acclaimed clay artist Cliff Mendelson for the unique Day-in-Clay Program. This day-long clay extravaganza gave the students an in-depth, hands-on series of lessons in clay artistry that went beyond traditional classroom teachings. For our older students, our District's fifth graders recently took a field trip to the Paul Zuccaire Gallery at Stony Brook University to gain further inspiration and appreciation for the arts.

These are just a few of the ways Port Jefferson is giving our students as many opportunities as possible to learn and become inspired by the arts.



All Students Welcome in Port Jefferson Athletics



Port Jefferson offers an extremely competitive athletic program for its students. No matter the season, our athletes routinely gain Long Island- and region-wide recognitions, and this spring season, has been no different. In addition to producing fine and recognized athletes, our program also prides itself on being an inclusive environment for all student-athletes.

One of the ways we have accomplished this is through our unified sports programs for students with and without intellectual and/or physical disabilities. Unified began in Port Jefferson in 2018 with Unified Basketball, which gave students of all abilities the opportunity to team up and enjoy the pleasure and health benefits of the sport. The success of the program led to the introduction in the 2022–2023 school year of Unified

Bowling, which follows the same spirit. We look forward to seeing the success of these programs continue.

Wellness is Key at Port Jefferson

To ensure that students and staff feel a strong sense of belonging, the Port Jefferson School District is continuing its wellness mission through a variety of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs.

One of these initiatives includes a newly implemented therapy dog program. In partnership with the nonprofit Love on a Leash, a variety of dogs and their handlers have been visiting the elementary and secondary campuses on alternating Wednesdays throughout the school year. An abundance of research has demonstrated the advantages of therapy dogs on students' social, emotional, and academic well-being at school, and the District is proud to offer this opportunity for our school community.

In addition, the District is continuing its partnership with SameHere Global. SameHere stresses the importance of fostering a society where both children and adults feel comfortable talking about life's challenges. Professionals from the organization have provided training to staff on effective communication strategies to utilize with children, and SameHere has also facilitated numerous evening wellness workshops for parents and guardians. The District's alliance with the organization has already yielded wonderful results in a relatively short period of time.



**Port Jefferson Public
School District**
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Summer Camps Offer Additional Opportunities

At Port Jefferson Schools, we take pride in providing students as many opportunities as possible to follow their interests and succeed in whatever they put their minds to. One of the ways we honor this is through our athletics and arts summer camps. Whether your child would like to begin learning an instrument, continue training in their chosen sports, or just spend some time painting alongside friends, our summer camps have programs in a wide variety of activities at all grade levels. Please see below for what is on offer at our camps and how to sign up.

Summer Arts at Port Jefferson

Band Classes • String Classes
Studio Art Classes



*Follow the QR code for summer
arts camp sign-up information.*

Summer Athletics at Port Jefferson

Boys'/Girls' Soccer • Boys'/Girls' Track
Boys'/Girls' Lacrosse • Girls' Volleyball
Boys'/Girls' Tennis • Boys' Football
Boys' Baseball • Boys'/Girls' Basketball



*Follow the QR code for summer
athletics camp sign-up information.*

