

HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS

Wellness in our schools helps to foster an environment where students become better learners. Educating them about the importance of exercise, making healthy food choices, and staying away from drugs and alcohol leads to a school setting where they are eager to learn.

The district addresses health and wellness from many perspectives and sources. A Wellness Committee, consisting of administrators, principals and PTA representatives, ensures that students are well-equipped to make proper nutritional and health decisions by weaving these programs into the district's curriculum.

Starting at the elementary level, students learn how to make good decisions. Every year, all schools in the district participate in Red Ribbon Week. As the name suggests, this year's theme, "YOLO: Be Drug-Free," reinforced staying drug-free. Students signed pledges, created posters and wore ribbons to show their support to stay on the right path. Elementary school students participate in a "Walk to School" day during the beginning of the year as a reminder to get their daily exercise. Throughout the school year, each building also conducts fire

safety and police presentations about what to do in emergency situations and reinforces internet and social media safety through various activities.

The junior and senior high schools further the wellness initiatives with drug awareness programs and participation in events such as World AIDS Day at the end of November (see inside).

Interscholastic athletics are an integral part of the district's physical education program, with class instruction providing the base, intramurals affording additional experience/competition, and interscholastic athletics providing the opportunity for the athletically gifted to reach their fullest potential through activities designed to provide instruction and competition.

Along with offering intramural programs from the elementary to the high school level, the district also offers many competitive interscholastic sports. At the high school, there are 28 varsity sports spanning the fall, winter and spring seasons. At the junior high school, sports are broken into four seasons, allowing students to participate with greater diversity and helping them make more informed decisions when it comes time to choose a sport in high



school. In total, approximately 1,000 students in the two schools participate on an athletic team.

The district also addresses nutrition, both in the physical education classes and in the cafeteria. The food and nutrition program is rolling out a "free breakfast" and "grab and go" breakfast program to emphasize the importance of having a healthy breakfast to start the school day. Smoothies were introduced this year at the junior high school and elementary levels. The students can enjoy the smoothies as a healthy à la carte item or as part of their school meal.

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"The West Babylon School District understands the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle for students. It is our goal as a district for our students to adopt healthy lifestyle habits and make sensible choices that lead to long and productive lives."
– Superintendent of Schools Dr. Yiendhy Farrelly

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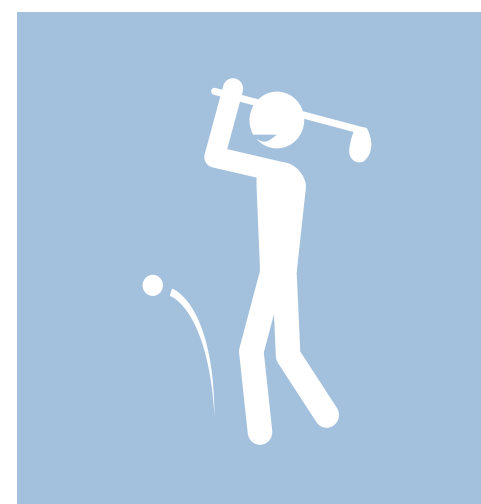


During National School Lunch Week, students sampled different smoothies and had "secret servers" during the lunch service. Principals and teachers participated by putting on their hairnets and serving the students their meals.



Tooker Avenue Principal Charles Germano has a passion for tennis and likes to share his love of the game with his students. Each year, Mr. Germano, along with the help of physical education teacher Michael Bellacosa, organizes a tennis program for fourth and fifth grade students before school.

South Bay psychologist Laure Loughlin and fifth grade students participated in an after-school Mindfulness Workshop and created "mindful jars." The concept of the jar comes from the book "Moody Cow Meditates" by Kerry Lee MacLean. The colorful glitter in the jar represents a person's angry thoughts. When the jar is shaken, the glitter "swirls around like crazy in the jar," just as our thoughts do when we are angry. But, then the glitter slows down and gradually settles to the bottom of the jar, just as our minds do when we take deep breaths to recover from being angry. The students intend to use their mindful jars as well as other mindfulness techniques they learned from Ms. Loughlin, to help them stay calm and focused during stressful times.



At Santapogue, Kelly Durkin's fourth grade class practices the calm classroom curriculum. The program was developed based on two Harvard Medical School studies conducted by Dr. Herbert Benson. The first study examined the relationship between relaxation response activities implemented in elementary classrooms and positive academic and behavioral student outcomes. The study concluded that by having teachers facilitate students in specialized techniques that elicit the relaxation response (the release of chemicals in the body and brain that lowers stress, causes muscles and organs to slow down, and increases blood flow to the brain), positive student outcomes would occur. The outcomes included increases in GPA, cooperative behavior and work habit ratings each year as the study progressed. Mrs. Durkin has seen a significant positive change in students in task behavior, with only a few minutes each day dedicated to these techniques.

World AIDS Day is a building-wide assembly for all high school students and staff to attend as well as an evening performance for the community. This year's World AIDS Day theme of "Access Equity Rights Now" reminds us that all our gains will be lost if we do not continue to push forward and build a strong global movement to change the course of this epidemic.

Each year, a group of senior high school students puts together a performance to educate their peers and the community on HIV/AIDS and how to show compassion to those living with the virus. Students prepare months in advance to adequately share the effects and dangers of AIDS. The performance includes student choreographed dances, informative skits and true stories of AIDS victims as well as inspirational songs and poems.



Each year, the district hosts a Fun Run and Wellness Fair for students and their families. Students take part in activities such as yoga, karate and a variety of other outdoor events designed to promote exercise, good health and wellness.



The district promotes a healthy lifestyle in the areas of physical education and health where an emphasis has been placed on increasing levels of physical activity. Also, recognizing the importance of emotional wellness as an imperative aspect of healthy living, the district has maintained a strong character education/ social emotional learning initiative in all of its schools.



The junior high school's Bully Proof Club works to make a difference in the school and the community. During Red Ribbon Week, the students participated in a walk for "Kids Against Drugs."



AN UPDATE ON SECURITY

In its ongoing effort to boost safety and security measures, the district has implemented a number of security enhancements district-wide.

Entrance doors will remain locked at all times, and in order to gain access to a building, visitors must provide a government issued identification card which will be scanned through the district's Raptor ID system. Additional access card readers, door ajar systems and double door vestibules will be installed district-wide.

At each school entrance, a security guard has been stationed, with two guards added to the high school. This brings the total number of security officers to 33. In

addition, security officers have received CPR, first aid, automated external defibrillator, EpiPen and Narcan training with supplementary instruction scheduled throughout the year. Security officers now have email accounts and access to building camera views.

A security team of active and retired law enforcement officers has been established for athletic and major school-wide events. Specific protocols have been developed for athletic events, such as the size of bags and backpacks allowed.

The district's director of security regularly meets with the Suffolk County Police Department and other local



school district security teams regarding any concerns in the neighborhood. Building emergency teams have been established district-wide, and physical education teachers have been assigned radios for outdoor classes. Procedures for accounting of all students during drills have been reviewed, updated and implemented in all school buildings.

The district is currently evaluating its exterior camera and public announcement systems in all buildings

to determine whether replacements or updates are needed. A command center at the high school is also being established to allow for a security officer to have "eyes" on all buildings and contact emergency responders if necessary.

"The safety and security of our students and staff are our top priority," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Yiendhy Farrelly. "We will continue to enhance our security measures to ensure a safe school environment."

Budget Preparations Underway

Preparations are currently underway for the proposed 2017-18 budget, with the first draft scheduled to be presented to the Board of Education on Feb. 7. According to Michele Psarakis, executive director for finance and operations, the Board of Education and administrators will discuss state aid estimates, other revenues and the proposed tax levy at the meeting. It is the district's goal to remain within the allowable tax levy cap while maintaining current educational programs, clubs and sports.

The Board of Education encourages residents to become informed about the district's proposed 2017-18 spending plan by attending the scheduled budget workshops and public hearings. Community members are encouraged to vote on May 16.

March 14, 7 p.m.

Discussion of Budget Draft #2 development and the property tax levy limit.

March 28, 7 p.m.

Presentation of Budget Draft #2.

April 18, 7 p.m.

Final review and adoption of the 2017-18 proposed budget.

April 25, 6 p.m.

Budget presentation.

May 2, 7 p.m.

School budget hearing.

May 16, 7 a.m.-9 p.m.

Budget vote and Board of Education election.

All meetings held at 10 Farmingdale Road, West Babylon.



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