

THE LIONS PRIDE

WEST ISLIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WEST ISLIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

GREATNESS AWAITS

the West Islip *Class of 2024*

As the first of 316 graduates passed under the trellis, loud cheers erupted from packed bleachers on both sides of the turf field. Proud family members and friends continued to laud West Islip High School's Class of 2024 as they processed across the field to their seats on the sunny evening.

The moment was the culmination of a journey that began 13 years ago at four elementary schools. When the class finally came together in 2020 from two middle schools, it was at the height of the pandemic and it took a little extra time for them to get the true high school experience.

Being able to adapt to that sort of change was the theme of Principal Dr. Anthony Bridgeman's address to graduates. All their life experiences to date and the changes they have navigated have shaped them into the individuals they are today.

Superintendent Dr. Paul Romanelli encouraged graduates to be proactive with their thinking and their actions to shape the futures they want, whether 10 minutes ahead or many years later.

Academic leaders Emerson Ammirata and Jake Guttman addressed their fellow graduates. Emerson reflected on the incredible number of opportunities offered to students in West Islip, and spoke of two experiences that were particularly meaningful to her, cheerleading and vocal motion. In recounting her desire to

succeed academically, she highlighted her transformation from relying on validation as a motivator, to embracing a love of learning.

"Graduation is a beautiful day that symbolizes a future filled with potential," Jake said. He noted that they will face struggles along the way, but it is important to find light in the darkness and persevere.

In his congratulatory remarks, Board of Education President Anthony Tussie highlighted the Class of 2024's myriad accomplishments in academics, the arts and athletics. He reminded students to live a balanced life in today's fast-paced and demanding world, to "make time for the things that truly matter."

The graduation ceremony also included tributes to student Kyle Dilegame, who tragically passed during his senior year. An empty seat was left in his honor, and his name was called during the diploma presentation. At the end of the ceremony, four friends came to the podium to share their reflections. Mr. Tussie also honored John Thomas Gaffney, who passed away while at Oquenock Elementary School and would have graduated this year.

After the diplomas were handed out, senior class president Amy McCann asked her classmates to move their tassels. Shortly after, blue and white caps were tossed into the air and the seniors were officially West Islip alumni.



Graduation Speech Excerpts

**Dr. Anthony Bridgeman,
West Islip High School
Principal**

Remember, change is not just about the big, transformative moments but also the small, everyday adjustments that lead to personal and collective growth.

**Academic Leader
Jake Guttman**

You have the potential for greatness. It's locked inside of you, and understand that you are holding the key. It's up to you to decide whether you keep it hidden or show the world what you're made of.

**Board of Education Vice
President Pete McCann**

Behind your story was a community of people who helped you each day, your family, your teachers, your friends – they were all on this path with you.

**Dr. Paul Romanelli, West Islip
Union Free School District
Superintendent of Schools**

Your actions matter, and we know that you will do what it takes to make your world, and all of our worlds, something to be proud of. To me, that is what makes this class particularly special – the way you think is innovative and future focused.

**Board of Education President
Anthony Tussie**

As you move forward into this next phase of your lives, remember to strive for balance. Take the time to rest when you need it, to play when you want to, and to invest in your own well-being. Surround yourself with people who lift you up, pursue activities that bring you joy, and never lose sight of what truly matters to you.

**Academic Leader
Emerson Ammirata**

It is imperative to understand that learning should only be done to expand your horizons. By learning, you are improving your own quality of life and understanding the functionality of the world around you.

Highlights from 2024

SCIENCE

- Kristie Ferruzzi was named Master Teacher.
- John Lavery is a finalist for the prestigious Anton Banko Excellence in Science Teaching Award for elementary teachers.
- Brian Haldenwang is a finalist for the Suffolk County Teacher of the Year award.
- Jaymee Gagliardi's class at Udall Road Middle School and Justin J. DeMaio's class at Bayview Elementary had success in the PSA Video Student Challenge run by PSEG. Udall had students win in the finals and both groups made it to the semifinals.
- Science research and STEM research teachers at both middle schools and the high school had students place at this year's New York State Science and Engineering Fair.
- Mary Kroll's research students presented their exceptional work at the National Synchrotron Light Source II annual users' meeting.
- The high school Science Olympiad team, coached by Jessica Alvarez and Kelly Sepe, competed against 60 teams and placed fourth and eighth.
- Christine Mulroy's Advanced Placement Biology students visited STEM labs at the elementary schools and collaborated with elementary students on exciting experiments.
- All students and staff viewed the eclipse safely with glasses provided by the district, participated in hands-on activities related to the event, and enjoyed a small viewing party with telescopes set up by Mr. Vitti and sensors by Mary Kroll's coding club.

ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

- The district was awarded a Gene Haas Foundation scholarship grant for students pursuing careers in manufacturing and engineering. This year's award was \$8,000.
- The high school Computer Aided Design classes partnered with third grade students at Bayview Elementary to create a Lego keychain in various alphabet letters.
- The Introduction to Trades class created a

Lending Library Memorial in memory of Thomas Compitello that will be donated and installed at the high school.

- Life skills class at Beach Street Middle School FUNctional Technology collected, sorted and mailed out solar glasses to be recycled.
- Ashley Pope won the LISTEMELA 2024 STEM Star Teacher Award.
- Video production students participated in a presentation at the ASSET Technology Conference.
- Video production students were involved in the development of a pool video preparing the community for the bond vote.
- Video production students participated in 80 LIVE announcement broadcasts and more than 120 announcement podcasts this year.
- The Little Lions Preschool class recently celebrated their graduation with a special photo session. Mr. Weber's Digital Photography students were on hand to take graduation pictures of the preschoolers.

ATHLETICS

- The boys volleyball team was the Division I champions and county finalists.
- The girls soccer team was League II champions.
- The football team was Big Four champions and county finalists.
- The boys swimming team was League II champions and Small School county champions.
- The boys track team was undefeated League IV champions for the third year in a row.
- Rocco Carpinello was named county champion in long jump and triple jump and New York State champion in the triple jump.
- The softball team was named Suffolk County champions.
- The boys tennis team was undefeated and named Division II champions.
- The girls lacrosse team was named Suffolk County champions and Long Island champions.
- The kickline team placed top three on Long Island.
- The Game Day cheerleading team placed second at nationals in Orlando, Florida.
- Eight coaches received "Coach of the Year" honors: Nick Grieco, Division II Soccer Coach of the Year; Steve Mileti, Division II Football Coach of the Year; John Schrank, Division I Volleyball Coach of the Year; Jeremy Robertson, League IV Track & Field Coach of the Year; George

Botsch, Division II Girls Tennis Coach of the Year; Colleen Reilly, League III Softball Coach of the Year; George Botsch, Division II Boys Tennis Coach of the Year; and Joe Nicolosi, Newsday Suffolk County Girls Lacrosse Coach of the Year.

- West Islip was a 2023-2024 NYSPHSAA School of Distinction with 33 of 33 varsity athletic teams being recognized as NYS Scholar Athlete Teams.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- The library media centers did One Book, One School at both middle schools. Every middle school student read "The One and Only Ivan" and completed different activities and challenges for prizes.
- The English as a new language and world language departments hosted an International Night that featured entertainment and food for English language learner families across the district.
- This year, all prekindergarten through fifth grade teachers engaged in several professional development sessions on the science of reading and its application in English language arts classrooms. As a district, we successfully implemented a structured literacy program in prekindergarten through grade two, focusing on foundational reading skills, with plans to expand to grade three next year. Additionally, a committee of teachers and administrators has been meeting throughout the year to plan future English language arts curriculum shifts across grades K-5, aligning with current research and best practices.

ART AND MUSIC

- West Islip Schools was selected for the Best Communities in Music Education in the nation for the seventh consecutive year.
- West Islip High School seniors Julia Kennedy and Kaylee Turcios were selected for the prestigious Long Island's Best Young Artists at The Hecksher Museum.
- West Islip High School had approximately 50 students who were selected for All-County and Long Island String festivals.
- West Islip High School artists were represented at various competitions and exhibitions throughout the state of New York.
- West Islip High School had seven student-musicians selected for NYSSMA All-State honors this year.
- Seniors enjoyed several trips and activities this year that included New York City and Disney World.

Calvin Adam
Macaulay Honors
College (Baruch
College)

Francesco Aguanno
University at Buffalo

Michael Albertelli
University of New
Haven

Daniel Albrecht
SUNY Cortland

Daniel Alini
High Point University

Jackson Allen
Farmingdale State
College

Olivia Alongi
University of
Connecticut

Jaden Amezquita
Suffolk County
Community College

Aneliese Ammirata
Rutgers University

Emerson Ammirata
Union College

Jacob Anderson
Trade School

Sydney Anderson
Pace University,
Westchester Campus

Anthony Andresen
SUNY Maritime
College

Jake Avella
University at Albany,
SUNY

Domenic Azzariti
Sacred Heart
University

Austin Bakalo
Moravian University

Chase Bakalo
Suffolk County
Community College

Thea Baker
Manhattanville
University

Kaleigh Barany
Nova Southeastern
University

Cameron Barton
SUNY College at
Oswego

Isabella Basini
Suffolk County
Community College

Michael Baumert
Employment

Chase Bedell
Adelphi University

Charlotte Begg
SUNY College at
Geneseo

Bukurie Bekteshi
Binghamton University

Tyler Belcher
Suffolk County
Community College

Jessica Belle
University of New
Haven

Kaitlyn Benitez
St. Joseph's University
(New York)

Frances Bernholz
Farmingdale State
College

Marissa Beyhl
Berklee College of
Music

Jackson Bianca
SUNY Cortland

Sophia Biondo
University of Florida

Maceo Blumberg
University of Michigan

Danielle Bodner
New York University

William Borello
Rochester Institute of
Technology

Devin Boundy
Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical
University

Shaun Boyle
SUNY Cortland

Charles Brandenstein
University of Miami

Keith Brannick
Nova Southeastern
University

Carlie Brunengraber
University of
Wisconsin

Braiden Buccino
Suffolk County
Community College

Riley Buffa
SUNY New Paltz

Erick Burciaga
Florida Atlantic
University

Samantha Burns
Saint Leo University

Isabella Burrello
St. Joseph's University
(New York)

Zoe Burrello
St. Joseph's University
(New York)

Jason Butler
St. John's University

Sophie Butler
East Carolina
University

Camryn Byrnes
Lehigh University

Erica Calabrese
SUNY College at
Plattsburgh

Daniel Caltabellotta
SUNY College of
Technology at Delhi

Sean Cantwell
St. Joseph's University
(New York)

**Samantha
Cappelluzzo**
St. John's University

Rocco Carpinello
Columbia University

Alyson Carter
Quinnipiac University

Ryan Cascino
The University of
Tampa

Heather Casey
Trident Technical
College

Cadence Catalano
University of Rhode
Island

Logan Christensen
Hofstra University

Cassidy Clark
Hamilton College

Katherine Clark
University of
Mississippi

Paul Cole
Employment

Sophia Colonna
University of
Massachusetts

Austin Conroy
Five Towns College

Richard Conti
SUNY Maritime
College

Akeeliah Coombs
U.S. Navy

Logan Coppola
U.S. Marines

Ty Corbett
SUNY College at
Oswego

Edwin Coutino
Hernandez Electrical
Training Center

Angelo Cristadoro
Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical
University

Victoria Cusumano
Hofstra University

Amanda D'Angelo
Quinnipiac University

Riley Davies
Pennsylvania State
University

Emily Dean
Marist College

Mackenzie DeCarlo
Sacred Heart
University

**Anthony
DeCristofaro**
Long Island University

Connor Dedcovich
University at Buffalo

Maia Dejkanovic
Farmingdale State
College

James Delanoy
Fairfield University

Dominic Delta
Suffolk County
Community College

Leah DiCarlo
University at Buffalo

Natalie Dilan
St. John's University

Brandon Disbrow
Employment

Andrew DiStefano
Aviation School

Annabella Dixon
Farmingdale State
College

Matthew Dorn
SUNY College at
Oswego

Madeline Dunbar
York College of
Pennsylvania

Marcella Eisemann
Suffolk County
Community College

Ugur Ekren
Siena College

Nazlican Ekren
Nova Southeastern
University

Taylor Essex
University at Buffalo

Christian Fahey
Employment
Electrical Trade

Thomas Fallon
Suffolk County
Community College

William Fallon
Suffolk County
Community College

Aidan Fehrenbach
U.S. Navy

Brandon Ferrera
Suffolk County
Community College

Nicholas Ferrera
Western Suffolk
BOCES

Jordan Fileti
Florida Atlantic
University

Mercedes Finkelman
Employment

Mia Fiordimondo
SUNY Buffalo State

Michael Flynn
Bryant University

Maxwell Fortunato
Electrical Trade School

Ryan Foy
Alfred State College

Kayla Friaglia
Nova Southeastern
University

Nicholas Gaiardelli
Farmingdale State
College

Vivian Gallagher
Rutgers University

Devynn Garcia
SUNY Oneonta

Nicholas Garelli
Farmingdale State
College

Olivia Genovese
University of Rhode
Island

**Alex Gitomer-
Dawson**
SUNY College at
Geneseo

Giovanni Giua
Universal Technical
Institute Automotive
School

Lila Gmelch
SUNY Cortland

Robert Govier
Employment

Gianna Grabhorn
Florida Atlantic
University

Ayelen Gracia
Suffolk County
Community College

Julia Gregory
Quinnipiac University

Isabella Grimaldi
Ithaca College

Jack Groark
Farmingdale State
College

Ryann Gross
Misericordia University

Nicholas Guimaraes
University of
Connecticut

Jake Guttman
High Point University



Gavin Haff
Suffolk County
Community College

Emily Hamm
Binghamton University

Roger Heins
Farmingdale State
College

**Johedi Herrera
Diazgranados**
Johnson & Wales
University

Ryan Hicks
The University of
Tennessee

Brian Hose
University at Buffalo

Nicholas Hubbard
SUNY Maritime
College

Jacob Hurst
University at Albany,
SUNY

Ella Iacono
SUNY College at
Plattsburgh

Jasmine Jack
Farmingdale State
College

Michael Johnson
Clemson University

Aidan Jordan
Bentley University

Anthony Kaatsiz
Suffolk County
Community College

Anna Kalinowski
Gettysburg College

Kerem Kasap
St. John's University

Gabriella Keane
Suffolk County
Community College

Patrick Kelly
Rochester Institute of
Technology

Julia Kennedy
Binghamton University

Thomas Kerrigan
SUNY College at
Potsdam

Talha Khan
Farmingdale State
College

Cody King
Western Welding
Academy Wyoming

Luis Kinney
Employment

Veronica Knoop
Quinnipiac University

Alex Konopka
Farmingdale State
College

Sedona Kopp
University of Scranton

Daniel Kossmann
Bixhorn Technical
Center

Michael Krupski
University at Buffalo

Gavin Kuhnla
Siena College

Jessica Kyro
Long Island Beauty
School

James Kyro
Farmingdale State
College

Gabrielle La Donna
Long Island University

Brianna Lagnese
Nassau Community
College

LeeAnn Lamotte
Iona University

Michael LaRosa
Nassau Community
College

Giavanna Lazaro
Suffolk County
Community College

Jad Limane
Farmingdale State
College

Mandy Lin
Fashion Institute of
Technology

Milayna Litrenta
St. Joseph's University
(New York)



Samantha LiVecchi
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Technology

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High Point University

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Bryant University

Ethan Mariani
Five Towns College

Camryn Mariano
University of New
Haven

Owen Marks
Hofstra University

Raymond Martin
Employment

Ethan Martinez
Farmingdale State
College

Vida Martinez
Culinary Institute of
America

Kevin Mauri
Michigan State
University

Kyle McCabe
Farmingdale State
College

Amy McCann
Marist College

Fiona McKay
Suffolk County
Community College

Luke Meisser
Suffolk County
Community College

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Adelphi University

Dean Miller
The University of
Tennessee

Shea Miller
University of
Mississippi

Lily Mills
Adelphi University

Vincenzo Milone
Employment

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Rutgers University

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University at Buffalo

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Universal Technical
Institute Automotive
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Ashlyn Murphy
SUNY New Paltz

Kathryn Mushorn
Providence College

Andrew Narsingh
Flagler College

Jimmy Negrón
Vaughn College of
Aeronautics and
Technology

Mandy Nicolosi
SUNY New Paltz

Nicholas Nigro
Nova Southeastern
University

Brendan Obloj
Flagler College

Jesse Olfano
Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical
University

Bryce Olsen
U.S. Navy

Fintan O'Neill
Employment

Isabelle O'Neill
University of South
Carolina

Kraig O'Neill
Florida Gulf Coast
University

David Orehosky
St. John's University

**Tadhg O'Sullivan-
Bakshi**
University of Southern
California

Joseph Pace
Fairfield University

Melina Padilla
Stony Brook University

Joseph Palmisano
St. Joseph's University
(New York)

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SUNY Maritime
College

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Employment

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SUNY

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SUNY Oneonta

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University of
Massachusetts

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Nassau Community
College

Daniel Pipitone
SUNY College at
Potsdam

Christopher Piropato
Endicott College

Nicholas Pitre
Employment

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Binghamton University

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SUNY Oneonta

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University at Albany,
SUNY

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Hirschfield**
Suffolk County
Community College

Devon Prieto
James Madison
University

Braden Pritchard
Rochester Institute of
Technology

Markos Prokopiou
Purdue University

**James Questel
Marques**
Louisiana State
University and
Agricultural &
Mechanical College

Colleen Rafferty
Rochester Institute of
Technology

Noah Rakovic
Apex Technical School

Stephen Rayburn
Marshall University

Alexa Reale
St. Joseph's University
(New York)

Logan Reese
Farmingdale State
College

Matthew Regina
University at Buffalo

Christopher Rentz
Suffolk County
Community College

Jaelyn Richard
Suffolk County
Community College

Robert Richardson
Florida Atlantic
University

Veronika Ripperger
Hofstra University

Kaylee Rittenhouse
Quinnipiac University

Micaela Rivas
Long Island University

Derek Rivera
Arcadia University

Derek Rivera
Arcadia University



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Shea Ronayne
DePaul University

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Sendra**
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Technology

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Employment

Jayden Roy
Employment

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SUNY Cortland

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CUNY John Jay
College of Criminal
Justice

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SUNY

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Long Island University

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University of
Mississippi

Jacob Salvati
Farmingdale State
College

Kori Sansone
Farmingdale State
College

Sophia Santos
Farmingdale State
College

Hailey Sauers
New York Institute of
Beauty

Jackson Scavo
SUNY Cortland

Jack Schafer
Employment

Jacob Schafer
St. John's University

Cassidy Scheben
Binghamton University

Connor Scheid
Farmingdale State
College

Andrew Schiano
SUNY Cortland

Amanda Schneider
Endicott College

Monish Seepersaud
Farmingdale State
College

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Carolina

Luca Severino
Employment

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University of
Wisconsin

Carley Sgueglia
Elon University

Angelina Shannon
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Connecticut

Dante Siegfried
Employment

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Marist College

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Long Island University

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Emerson College

Seamus Smith
Academy of Aviation –
Farmingdale

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Geneseo

Olivia Sowa
Iona University

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Fordham University

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Suffolk County
Community College

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Suffolk County
Community College

Sophia Stehlik
The Oberlin
Conservatory of Music

Claire Stockdale
SUNY New Paltz

Sarah Taheny
Quinnipiac University

Joseph Tapp
Nassau Community
College

James Tasevoli
Employment

Christopher Thomas
Nassau Community
College

Brian Timmer
Coastal Carolina
University

Aaron Tomasello
SUNY Oneonta

Justin Torres
Hofstra University

Severo Torres
Stony Brook University

Marco Traina
SUNY Cortland

Stephen Trama
University of
Bridgeport

Matthew Triglia
Providence College

Michael Tronolone
Hofstra University

Jake Tufariello
Employment

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Syracuse University

Vincent Turner
Employment

Jenna Tyler
University of
Connecticut

Christopher Vail
University at Albany,
SUNY

Carmine Vandenberg
Eastern Long Island
Academy of Applied
Technology

Drew Varvaro
Long Island University

Julia Vassallo
University of Delaware

Christopher Vomvos
Farmingdale State
College

Daniel Von Thaden
Stony Brook University

Sophia Ward
Suffolk County
Community College

Michael Washington
University of Miami

Brooke Wisniewski
SUNY Oneonta

Matthew Wolfe
Suffolk County
Community College

Barry Wood
Electrical Training
Center

Finn Wood
New York Institute of
Technology

Si'nai Woods
Suffolk County
Community College

Melissa Woss
SUNY College of
Technology at Delhi

Kelly Zambrano
Suffolk County
Community College

Logan Zimmerly
SUNY Cortland



West Islip School District
Freyer Administration Building
100 Sherman Avenue
West Islip, NY 11795

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*****ECRWSS**

Residential Customer

West Islip, New York 11795



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@westislippublicschools



Username:
@west_islip_public_schools



Congratulations to All on Moving Up!



The district extends its
congratulations to the following
retirees for the 2023-2024
school year.

ADMINISTRATORS/TEACHERS/
TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

Jill Culver
Kristen Finnegan
Maria Lucie
Debra Magee
James McManus Jr.

Carrie Beth Russo
Kelly Sepe
Karen Testa
Mary Claire Yoder
Christine Stone

SUPPORT STAFF:

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Ralph Fabrizio
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