

Commack Courier

August 2019

A Board of Education
Publication

A Fond Farewell to the Class of 2019

Congratulations to our 548 graduating seniors! The sun was shining brightly as our graduates marched proudly onto the field in their robes and honor cords. The High School bleachers were filled to capacity with family and friends celebrating their accomplishments. We wish you the best of everything in your futures!

The commencement ceremony included esteemed speakers from administration, the Board of Education, and our student academic leaders. Student musicians from the High School Band and ICA Chamber Choir enhanced the event. Master of ceremonies, James Desmond, and class advisors Keira Keenan and Christina Pawlowski, welcomed the students to the podium to receive

their diplomas and to be congratulated by Board members and Principal Leslie Boritz.

The Class of 2019 proved their worth by earning over \$58 million in scholarships to universities and colleges. More than 94% will be attending college, some entering with almost a full year of college credits earned from taking college classes at the High School. An impressive 16% of our seniors earned the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma. We pray for the safety of the ten seniors who are entering each branch of the military to serve our country.

To view more photos and the video of the graduation ceremony, please visit the [Commack Website](#).



First Day of School September 4, 2019

Class Assignments/Schedules will be posted on the Parent Portal in the afternoon on the dates listed below:

Intermediate – Wednesday, August 21
Primary – Thursday, August 22
High School – Monday, August 26
Middle School – Tuesday, August 27

Check the Back to School pages for more information!
www.commackschools.org/backtoschool.aspx

Senior Highlights

Graduation Rate	98.6%
Total Regents Diplomas	98.4%
Total Advanced Regents Diplomas	76.6%
Graduates Attending College	94.7%
Total Value of Scholarships	\$58,888,136
Graduates Receiving Scholarships/Awards	348
National Merit Scholarship Winner	1
National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists/Finalists	6
National Merit Scholarship Commended Students	17
National Hispanic Recognition Scholars	4
New York State Merit Scholarship	14
President's Award for Educational Excellence and Achievement	286



More photos at www.commackschools.org

Commack High School Class of 2019 Top Cohort Additions

The students pictured below achieved final grade point averages that exceeded 100% and were added to Commack High School's Class of 2019 Top Cohort group (pictured previously in the July *Commack Courier*). Congratulations!



Jordyn Axelrod
SUNY Geneseo



Isabella Butterfield
NY Institute of Technology



Isabella DelRosario
University of Florida



Ryan Dery
Villanova University



Bridget Flynn
Binghamton University



Gianna Rinaldi
Hofstra University



CALENDAR COLORING CONTEST



Enter Today!

Do you love to color?

Show us your skills as an artist by coloring in this year's District Calendar cover.

- Download the image from the website and print it out.
- Color it in using crayons, pencils, or markers.
- All students are welcome to participate.
- When you're done, just drop it in the box in your school's lobby by September 30.

Your work will be judged by our art teachers. The winners will be announced in the next issue of the *Commack Courier* and on the website. The top three entries get to take home a basket of art supplies to help pursue their talents. There is nothing to lose!

Superintendent's Message

Hello, and welcome to a new and exciting school year! The summer vacation seems to go by so quickly, filled with non-stop action in our schools. More than 1,000 children took advantage of our Cougar and MITA athletic camps, our SCOPE Summer Exploration Program, and our special education summer program. Our teachers and administrators have been reviewing and rewriting curriculum, and interviewing and appointing new staff members to fill the vacancies left by our retirees.

Our goals continue to focus on providing each student with a premier educational experience and a path to a fulfilling future, based on every child's interests and needs. Commack School District is committed to providing a Balanced Educational Program designed to provide access and opportunity for our students to support college and career readiness. Our emphasis is to provide a balanced social, emotional, academic, and physical program through diverse curricular and extracurricular opportunities.

Maintaining a safe environment is a top priority, and we have tightened our security measures based on recommendations from law enforcement and a private consultant. You will notice increased rigor at all entry points to protect our students and staff.

A bond exploratory committee was formed to discuss needed and necessary upgrades to our aging facilities and infrastructure. We will be seeking community input in the near future, and hope to hear from you. The state-aidable bond would be "tax neutral," meaning no additional tax burden on our district homeowners. Under consideration for im-

provement are roofs, windows, primary bathroom upgrades, masonry repairs, boilers, secondary school science lab refurbishing, gym and athletic field refurbishing, library upgrades and additional security and safety measures. In addition, the committee is discussing adding air conditioning to our large gathering spaces in all schools.

We hope you will enjoy the benefits of our enhanced communication tools such as our teacher web pages, our apps, and the many other resources that compliment classroom instruction and school-home communication for our parents and students. The Parent Portal has expanded its capabilities as well, including the ability to update your contact information so we can stay in better touch with you.

Please be sure to keep in touch with us by opting in for [community news emails](#), parent/guardian text messaging, downloading our apps, visiting the [Commack Website](#), or by following us on social media. On Twitter we are @CommackSchools and on Instagram, we are @CommackSD. My Instagram account is @Commack_Supt.

Please feel free to send me an email at any time should you have questions or concerns. My email address is djames@commackschools.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donald James
Superintendent



WHAT'S HAPPENING!

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Wednesday, September 4, 2019

Back to School Packets & the 2019-2020 School Calendar are posted on the website!

9-11 Night of Remembrance

Commack High School Heroes Memorial Track

6:30 p.m. All Welcome!

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

Thursday, September 12, 2019

Hubbs Administration Center at 8:00 p.m.*

Thursday, October 10, 2019

Commack High School at 7:30 p.m.*

*The Board will convene at 6:30 p.m. and is expected to adjourn into Executive Session. Public Meetings will commence at times stated above.

SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP KICK OFF

October 26, 2019

Commack High School at 4:00 p.m.

HOMECOMING

October 26, 2019 - Parade at 1 p.m.

followed by Alumni of Distinction and team festivities

Football Game Kick-Off at 2:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Check out our Community Events page
www.commackschools.org

NOMINATE AN ALUMNUS OF DISTINCTION

Each year the Commack High School honors Commack alumni based on career achievements, community involvement, charitable work, etc. An award ceremony is part of the pre-game festivities featured at Homecoming on October 26.

Nomination forms are posted on the [Commack Website](#).

SUMMER FUN

SCOPE Summer Explorations 2019



Commack's SCOPE Summer Explorations Program was a rousing success! More than 300 children enjoyed the July days learning new skills while having fun and making new friends.

There were many classes to choose from! Here's a sampling: Computer Coding,

Drama Kids, Escape the Room, Edible Science, Lego Masters, Crafting with Nature, Taste the Rainbow, Mad Scientists, Team Sports, Full STEAM Ahead, or Wearable Art.

There were also "Fun Friday Activities" to look forward to every week. There was

Funny Hat & Hair Day, Fan Favorite Friday (favorite sports team), and Freedom Friday (wear the red, white, and blue).

The children are sure to show off their new skills to family and friends. Who needs to order pizza when you know how to make it yourself?

COMMACK STYLE

Cougar Camp & Movement in the Arts



This summer's Cougar Camp was every aspiring athlete's dream come true! It was an opportunity for children in grades 3-8 to try out something new like golf, field hockey, fencing, gymnastics, cheerleading, soccer, volleyball, or one of the other 15 camp offerings. Led by Commack's PE

teachers and NYS certified coaches, as well as student volunteers for role models, this self-supporting camp hosted over 900 children over five weeks.

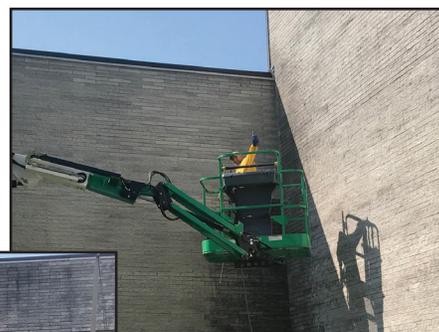
A new Movement in the Arts Camp (MITA) began this year for our littlest Cougars in grades K-2, featuring cooperative

game play, along with movement and spatial awareness activities.

Athletic Director Pat Friel said, "We are so proud of the youth program we run here in Commack. The best part is that kids at camp can explore any sport to find their passion."

Preparing for a New School Year

Facilities Department Spruces Up the Schools



The front facades of our schools were power-washed.

Boilers were replaced at North Ridge and Rolling Hills. A crane aided in the placement of the 5,700 pound units.



New roofs were installed at the Middle School and both Rolling Hills and Indian Hollow Primary Schools.

Summer is a very important time for our facilities crews, who are working inside and outside repairing, deep-cleaning, and making major improvements to our Commack School District properties. With 14 buildings and 238 acres of fields, parking lots, sidewalks, and roadways to maintain, much of the work must be completed in the heat of the summer when school is not in session.

Major projects included new roofs at the Middle School and at both Rolling Hills and Indian Hollow Primary Schools, new

boilers at North Ridge and Rolling Hills Primary Schools, a new computer lab at the High School, elevator refurbishments at our larger schools, and a brand new cafeteria service line set-up at the Middle School.

The football field at the Middle School was redone, and sidewalks, parking lots, and curbs were repaired and repainted as needed. Replacement of the turf at Commack High School is scheduled for this fall.

The District's second energy-efficient

cy project is underway (at no cost to the taxpayers), which includes the installation of lighting, windows, roofing, and HVAC upgrades. This year, the District plans include an energy self-sufficient building site with an associated on-site research component for students.

There is always much to be done to maintain our aging classrooms and structures. A big shout-out to all those who helped get everything done so our schools are safe and clean for our students and staff!

New Assistant Director of Special Education

Commack has a new member of our special education team, Savrena Riddle. Savrena has 15 years of successful administrative and teaching experience.

Her main role is to ensure that our special needs children receive the services they need to succeed in our schools. Her role includes facilitating meetings of the Committees on Special Education (CSE) and Preschool Special Education (CPSE), assisting the director, supervising staff and programs, and compiling the endless information required for state data reporting.

Savrena holds three Master's degrees, as well as five state certifications for teaching and administration. She began her career as a speech-language pathologist and



most recently served as a Special Education Supervisor and CSE/CPSE Chairperson in the Massapequa School District.

Savrena lives in Massapequa with her husband and two children. They enjoy spending time with family movie nights (lots of Disney!). When she has a free minute, Savrena loves to read and do fun things with her children and other extended family members.

New Assistant Principal at Sawmill

Thomas Lipani, an educator who believes in "forging relationships with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators" and "putting children first" was appointed as the Assistant Principal at Sawmill Intermediate School.

Thomas received his Bachelor's Degree from Dowling College, a Master's from Stony Brook, and an Advanced Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership from LI University. He is dually certified in Elementary and Special Education. A fourth and fifth grade teacher for fifteen years, he concurrently served as a principal's aide in his building in the Sachem School District. In addition to these roles, Thomas was also the Assistant Supervisor of Sachem's Special Education

Summer program for the past three summers.

An enthusiastic lifelong learner, Thomas lives in Shoreham with his wife, Erin, and two children. In his spare time, he enjoys reading and spending time outdoors with his children.

"I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to join and serve the Commack family. I look forward to working with parents, staff, and students to enhance what already is an exemplary educational program that focuses on the whole child."



What You Need to Know to Stay in the Know

- **Check the website!** Community News, Board of Education Meetings, Teacher Websites, Photos, News Updates, Academic and Athletic updates and so much more!
- **The Back to School Section** on the website lists District information for all parents, as well as pages for your individual school(s) for health forms, transportation, messages from your child's principal and everything you need to know for the start of school.
- **The Interactive Calendar** on the website lists school visitation dates, odd/even day schedules, and daily happenings around the District and in our schools.
- **Join SEPTA and the PTA!** All forms can be downloaded from the website or join at open-house!
- **Parents!** Find everything you need by clicking on the **Parents button** on the top of the home page. And please don't forget to update your email address in the **Parent Portal** if it has changed.
- **Download our Apps:** [Commack School District App](#), [Parent Portal App](#), [School Messenger App](#)

FALL ATHLETIC TRYOUTS

HIGH SCHOOL

August 19, 2019

Football and Cheerleading

August 26, 2019 - All other fall sports

MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL SPORTS

BEGIN on SEPTEMBER 4

Check the Calendar on the Website for dates and times for Athletic Physicals & Form Drop-offs.

Breakfast Program Waiver

Consistent with past years, the Commack Union Free School District has applied for a waiver of the school breakfast program. This waiver was requested after a poll of primary, intermediate, and middle school parents determined that the large majority of families would not avail themselves of a breakfast program. Interested parties may address comments or suggestions to the attention of Laura A. Newman, Assistant Superintendent for Business, PO Box 150, Commack, NY 11725.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Senior Walk 2019: A Blast From the Past



Students from the Class of 2019 spent their last day as Commack students walking through the halls of their primary schools. It was the perfect way to reflect on their journey from kindergarten to high school graduation. The children at Wood Park, North Ridge, Rolling Hills, and Indian Hollow marveled at the seniors in their caps and gowns, while the seniors reminisced about the time when they were much smaller. Many students were able to reunite with their former teachers. It was a very emotional, but very happy day. You can see videos from this day on the Commack Schools [YouTube channel](#) and more pictures on the [Commack Website](#).

Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Commack Union Free School District does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, age, marital status, partnership status, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, gender (sex), military status, veteran status, domestic violence victim status or political affiliation, and additionally does not discriminate against students on the basis of weight, gender identity, gender expression, and religious practices or any other basis prohibited by New York State and/or federal non-discrimination laws in employment or its programs and activities.

The District provides equal access to community and youth organizations.



Commack Board of Education:
Steven Hartman - President
Jarrett Behar - Vice President
Trustees: William Hender, Susan Hermer, and Justin Varughese

Superintendent of Schools:
Dr. Donald A. James