
Commack U.F.S.D. Board of Education

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT
NOVEMBER 9, 2023





Agenda

State of the District:
Special Education

Committee Reports



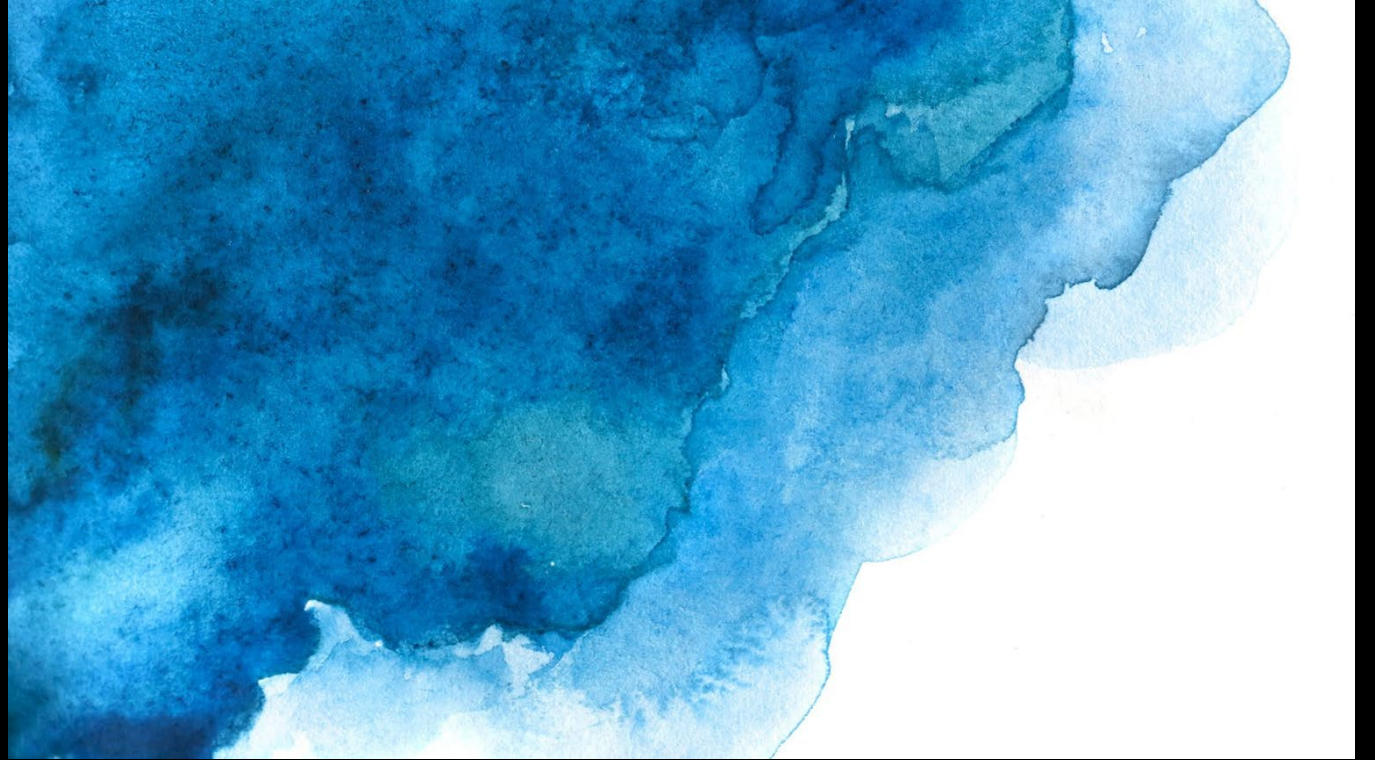
Suffolk County
Champions!

Girls Volleyball
and
Boys' Cross
Country

Special Education



Commack Special Education



"ABOVE AND BEYOND IS OUR BASELINE"

Special Education Supports: District Wide Initiatives

- ICT model shift
- Phonological Awareness
- Occupational Therapy Push-ins
- Sensory Spaces
- Mental Health Supports
- Homework Helpers
- Extra-curricular Activities
- Transition Supports
- Pamphlet
- Newsletter



The Newly Opened
Cedar Road School



Integrated Co-Teaching Update: Full Model at the Intermediate Level





Teacher Feedback

"The shift to a full day Integrated Co-Teaching model has been amazing! Having two minds facilitate a classroom community allows students to connect with different personalities. Co-teaching allows more opportunities for small group and one-to-one learning, and stronger modeling during lessons. The new model allows us to bounce ideas off each other in order to deliver the strongest, most creative lessons."

-3rd grade Special Education Teacher

"Teachers are able to collaborate, plan, team teach, and bring their own personalities into the classroom, connecting to each individual learner."

-4th grade ICT Team

Parent Feedback

"I love this ICT model. The teachers can give more direct feedback about the child's whole day. My child has told me they don't know the difference between the roles of the special education and the general education teachers."

"I think the new model is great. It is nice to have the support all day long with both educators in the room. They can both be there to execute different things for the kids that may need them or not."

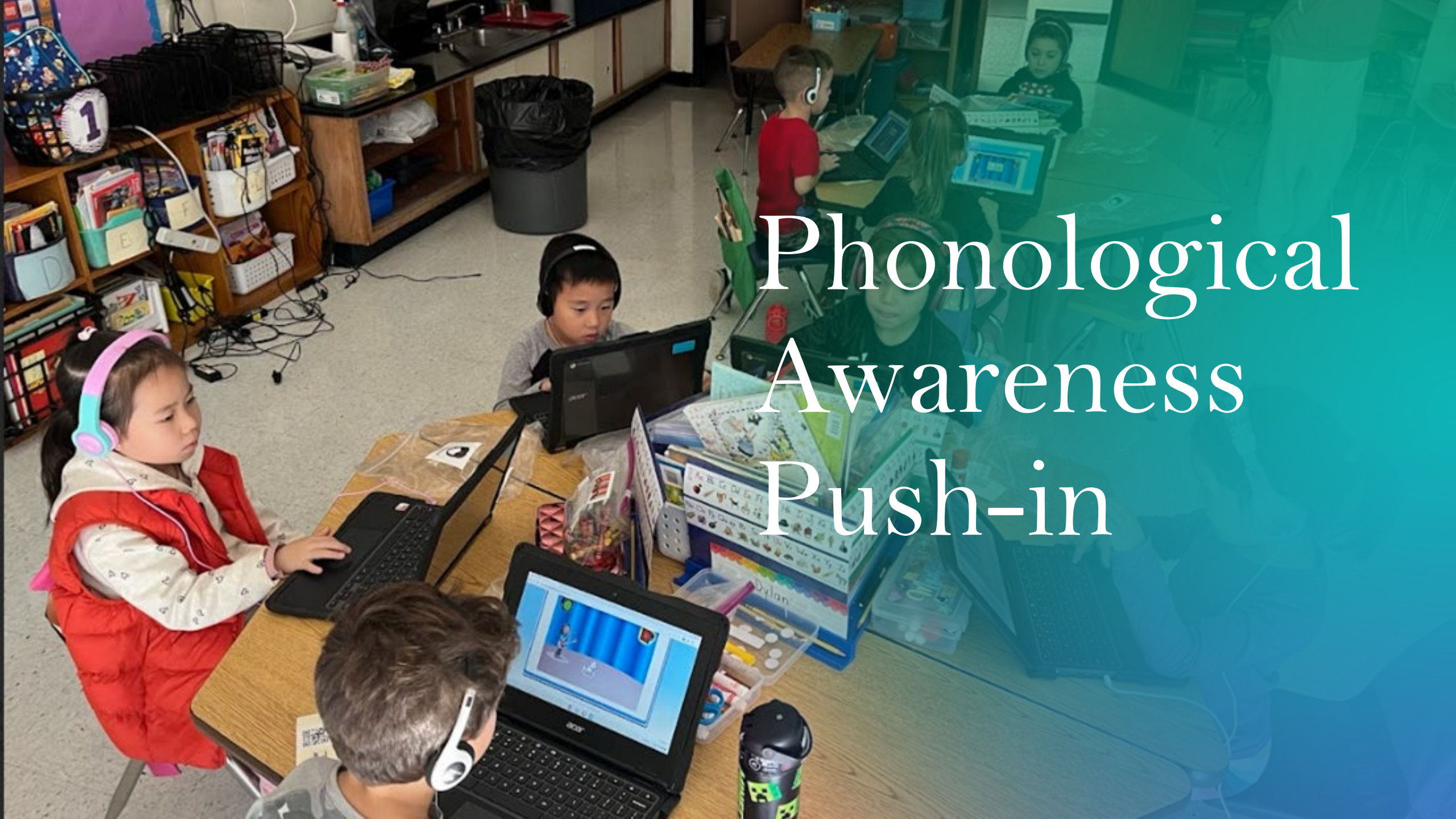
Student Feedback

"I like having my special education teacher in the class all day because she helps with all our subjects, and it feels more like I have two teachers."

-Fourth Grader

"I like my class this year because I have two teachers and when I don't understand something I can work with one of them at the back table. "

-Third Grader



Phonological Awareness Push-in

Phonological Awareness Push- in Program Overview

- **2022-2023: First Year**

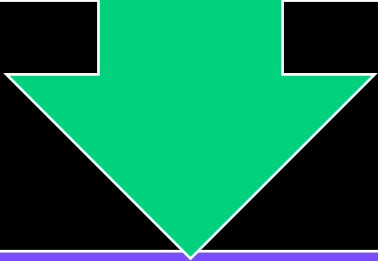
- 30-week program focusing on teaching the phonemic awareness skills of rhyming, blending, phoneme manipulation, segmenting, and initial, middle, and final sound identification
- Delivered weekly to all kindergarten classes by a speech/language pathologist
- Interactive and engaging format that uses teacher directed instruction and computer game-based reinforcement

- **2023-2024: Second Year Revisions**

- focusing on the same skills but more streamlined
- Refined the scope and sequence of the program and added skills such as rhyme production, and more practice with blending and segmenting syllables
- Added first and second grade special class 12:1 in addition to all kindergarten classes
- New screening tool that better aligns to the skills being taught

Phonological Awareness Push In: First year results

Improvements seen across all
phonemic awareness skills, for a majority of the
students



No significant group differences seen in the
growth of phonemic awareness skills on
average including:

Gender

Special education
status

Presence of a
speech/language
disability

Occupational Therapy Push-in

2022-2023 First Year

- To increase student independence and skill acquisition, the District implemented an Occupational Therapy Push-in program 1x weekly in all Kindergarten classrooms for 30 minutes during writing instruction that focus' on pencil grasp, letter formation, and strengthening to sustain tabletop activities.
- Lesson's focus on motor coordination skills needed for writing including letter formation, strength and endurance. Specifically designed activities work on improving core muscle strength, increasing hand and arm strength, grasp and cutting skills.
- This is considered a Tier 1 support as it aligns with the District's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Data is collected and reviewed to ensure that all students are demonstrating skills that will allow them to engage in the curriculum.



Occupational Therapy Push-in Support: First Year Results

DATA TRENDS:

IMPROVEMENT SEEN ACROSS ALL MOTOR COORDINATION SKILLS FOR MAJORITY OF STUDENTS

18% OF THE POPULATION WERE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SIGNIFICANT MOTOR COORDINATION WEAKNESS.

AFTER 12 WEEKS OF OT PUSH-IN SUPPORT, ONLY 7% CONTINUED TO DEMONSTRATE THIS LEVEL OF WEAKNESSES. STUDENTS WERE PULLED INTO SMALL GROUPS FOR MORE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION, AFTER 12 WEEKS OF ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION ONLY 2% CONTINUED TO DEMONSTRATE WEAKNESSES THAT WOULD REQUIRE FURTHER INTERVENTIONS.

DE-ESCALATION/TIMEOUT ROOM

De-escalation or timeout spaces are only used when other less restrictive and de-escalation techniques do not prevent imminent danger

Used only in conjunction with behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP) which parents are aware of and sign off on, or in the case of an emergency.

All rooms follow NYS Regulations

- Unlocked, doors can open from the inside
- Windows on the door that allow for continuous visual and auditory monitoring of the student
- Sized appropriately to allow the student to move/recline comfortably;
- Clean and free of objects dangerous to the student;
- Wall and floor coverings;
- Temperature control, the same as the rest of the building and ventilated

Preserve the safety, dignity, privacy and respect of the students.

Sensory Spaces

- All schools in District have designated their own unique space that includes sensory objects that are attuned to hearing, touching, seeing and listening.
- These calming spaces were designed to engage students in behaviors to help achieve calmness, focus and control.



Space Showcase



Mental Health Supports



All buildings utilize social/emotional learning programs to support students' learning, mental and behavioral health



Mental Health staff work at developmentally appropriate levels to promote positive and inclusive school climates



Positive Behavior Supports in all buildings



Partnership with Northwell

Secondary Supports

Commack Middle School/Commack High School

Homework Helpers

- Homework Helpers is a service that we offer to our special education students at the secondary level.
- Provided at both CMS and CHS, 5 days a week both before and after school, Monday through Friday.
- During these times, students are assisted by special education staff with homework completion, long-term project planning and test preparation.

Extra-Curricular/Sports

- Accessible clubs (Best Buds)
- Challenger basketball and bowling



Transition Services

Provide career/post-secondary options/exploration for students

Develop & integrate self-advocacy & self-determination curriculum

Connect/facilitate agency services: ex: VIABILITY, ACCES-VR, OPWDD, DOL

Provide parent support services & community accessibility to resources: through a Transition Fair, Guardianship Workshops , and more!

Liaison to HS Wilson Tech, agency, & post-secondary college programs

Provide & connect student to pre-employment & job-related services

Integrate Work Based Learning Programs to transition needs

Integrate transition goals, needs, & activities throughout the IEP

Collaborate to provide program reviews appropriate to transition goals

Special Education Brochure

Who to Contact

Questions about IEP/Services

Every student with an IEP is assigned a Case Manager. The first point of contact for any questions or concerns is the Case Manager or classroom teacher.

Questions about the Referral Process

School Psychologist
School Counselor
Building Administrator
Special Education Administrator

Additional Information About Special Education at Commack Schools Is Available At



Commack School District Office of Special Education

Mrs. Savrena Riddle
Director of Special Education
sriddle@commack.k12.ny.us

Dr. Justine Duncan
Assistant Director of Special Education
jduncan@commack.k12.ny.us

Dr. Kelly Seebeck
*Coordinator of Special Education
Grades 6-12*
kseebeck@commack.k12.ny.us

Mrs. Deana Fortunato
CPSE/CSE Chairperson
dfortunato@commack.k12.ny.us



Supporting Our Children and Families

<https://www.commackschools.org/septa.aspx>



178 Cedar Road
East Northport, New York 11731
(631) 912-2033

The Parent's Guide to Special Education at Commack UFSD



Scan for the



Commack Guide

SPECIAL EDUCATION



Commack School District

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

We are excited to launch our very first newsletter! The purpose of these issues will be to provide information, strategies, tips and spotlight successes within our special education department. My office will be collaborating with teachers, administrators, parents and the community to create resources that provide information to our families quarterly. We look forward to sharing this with you all.

Sincerely, Mrs. Riddle

Important Dates:

November 15th

SEPTA Mtg. 9:30 am
at Cedar Rd. School

December 20th

SEPTA Mtg. 7:00 pm
at Cedar Rd. School

In This Issue:

- Overview of Special Education programs in the Commack School District
- Who's who? and contact information
- Quarterly Recipe
- Helpful tips for home support on Mindfulness
- Spotlight on student success

Quarterly Newsletter

Cedar Road Alternative School

An Extension of
Commack High
School



Where students find their passion & purpose
in an innovative, academic setting.

Cedar Road School: Student Profile



MENTAL
HEALTH
NEEDS

TRAUMA

HISTORY OF
SCHOOL
REFUSAL



Cedar Road School Academics

Developing a strong collaboration among staff, students and parents

Using curriculum and instructional methods that are:

- relevant to their students,*
- compliment their life experiences*
- build on their strengths*



Small, supportive school environment



Students working towards Regents Diploma



Opportunities for half day Wilson Technology Center

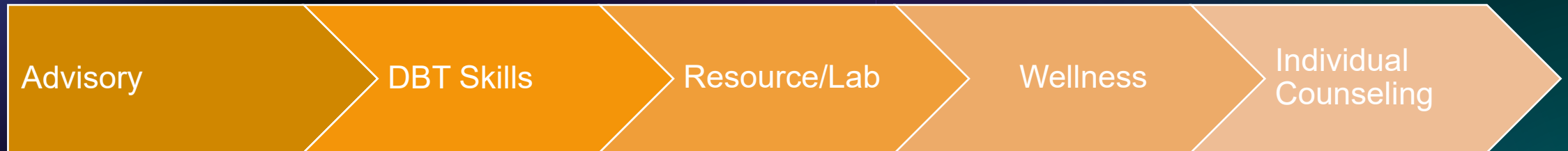


Transition Planning



Cedar Road School: Programmatic Supports

At Cedar Road we seek to provide a student-centered, nurturing, supportive environment that allows students to reach their full potential.





Cedar Road School: Teacher Testimonials

"Teaching at Cedar Road has been a truly singular experience. The small class sizes and personalized approach allow us to connect with students on a deeper level, fostering a sense of trust and collaboration that is seldom seen in traditional settings. I have seen students flourish, and it's incredibly rewarding to be a part of their journey. At Cedar Road, our goal is to empower students to unlock their full potential. In this supportive atmosphere, we can tailor our teaching methods to suit individual needs, making it possible for every student to succeed. Our students face unique challenges, and that's where we step in. The staff offers a range of support, from one-on-one tutoring to social-emotional counseling. Our ultimate goal is to help each student not only graduate but also develop the real-world and interpersonal skills they need to thrive afterwards."

-Science Teacher

"Every day more and more, we see smiles and genuine happiness; every day, more and more, we see a positive energy which is fostered by the safe and supportive environment; every day, more and more, we see a passion for learning grow due to students wanting to be at Cedar! A journey of a thousand mile starts with one step. All good things that last take time. Every day when the students and staff enter the building, we take a step in the right direction towards fostering growth and changing lives!"

-Math Teacher

"In the short period of time so far, I can already see the students' coming out of their shell and opening up. Their faces light up and they cannot hide their smiles when they receive positive feedback. As an educator and coach, my philosophy has always been that, when students feel comfortable and supported, they are more likely to be themselves and have the confidence to push past their perceived limits. All a student needs is a little help, a little hope, and someone who believes in them. I feel like at Cedar they are getting that and so much more."

-Physical Education Teacher



Student Testimonials



Classrooms at Cedar





Resource Room/Lab





Counseling Center





Student Life: Café, Advisory & Lounge





Questions from the Board of Education?

Committee Reports





Legislative Advocacy Committee Update

The Legislative Advocacy Committee (LAC) was established to assist the Board of Education in implementing solutions regarding legislative matters. The committee is charged with effectively communicating Commack's needs to our local, state, and federal elected representatives.

The Legislative Advocacy Committee is comprised of the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education members, Commack residents, High School students, Commack staff, members from the collective bargaining units and community members.

The committee will be meeting November 15 to review the current platforms and to bring new ideas to the table.

Multicultural Committee Update

- The Commack School District's Multicultural Committee is dedicated to celebrating the diversity of our district and offering our students and families a platform to embrace and share their unique backgrounds and experiences.
- Our student members of the committee have been working on ongoing projects to highlight Cultural Celebrations and Heritage Months at each school. Upcoming celebrations for November are Diwali and Native American Heritage Month.
- We held our first parent meeting of the year where we gathered with new members of the committee to set goals and share ideas. Our parent committee members are eager to support the ongoing work that our students at CHS and CMs have begun while looking ahead to our Multicultural festival in May!

