



SPRING EDITION

Commack Courier

Connecting with Students to Shape Their Futures



One of Superintendent Dr. Jordan Cox's primary goals for Commack Schools is to revamp the traditional educational system, in order to better equip students for life after graduation. "The 13 years that children spend in school should not be merely a dress rehearsal," he said. "We are actively making changes to connect students to their interests and to experience future career pathways right here in Commack."

A shift to authentic learning experiences and project-based learning is the core of the Commack success story for our high schoolers. Our commitment to exceed state requirements is demonstrated through our diverse range of self-directed, personalized programs and courses of study, including 53 college-level courses that enable students to earn college credits while still in high school. Our Career-related International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme, hands-on career and technical education programs, and the IB Diploma Programme also offer our students personalized paths to success. In addition, we partner with organizations to provide internship opportunities that help our students explore various career paths. All these initiatives have made Commack High School a thriving community of learners who are well-equipped for success beyond graduation.

"We offer unique choices for every student to explore," Dr. Cox stated. "Essentially, this program will enable students to 'test drive' potential career choices while still in high school."

In photo, Burr fifth graders join with administrators to give their input into the strategic planning process for the future of our classrooms and schools.

Upcoming Community Budget Information

BOE Informal Budget Hearing
April 13, 2023 - 8pm

BOE Meeting & Budget Adoption
April 20, 2023 - 8pm

BOE Meeting & Budget Hearing
May 4, 2023 - 8pm

All Meetings at the Hubbs Administration Building 480
Clay Pitts Road, East Northport

Voter Registration

May 4 and May 9, 2023

9am - 9pm

at Commack Middle School
& Commack High School

Budget Vote & Trustee Election

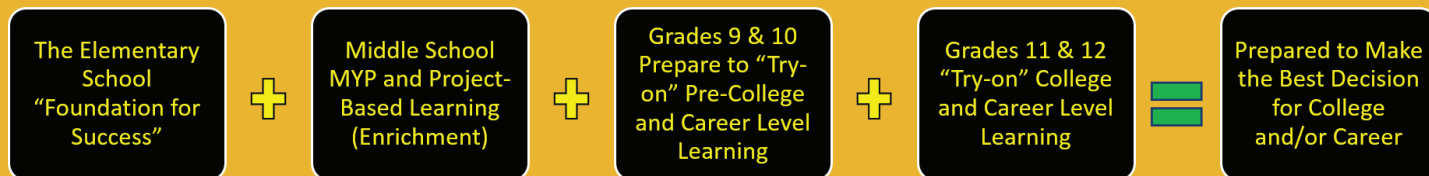
May 16, 2023

6am - 9pm

at Commack Middle School
& Commack High School

Budget Information and Presentations
are posted on the Commack Website:
www.commackschools.org/Budget.aspx

The Commack Educational Program Continuum



A balanced educational program that provides each student with authentic learning experiences. At the core of our success is Project-Based Learning.

Visit the Commack Website for the latest news! www.commackschools.org

Commack's Future Business Leaders

Nine students from Commack High School participated in events at Hofstra University for the Future Business Leaders of America Spring District Leadership Competition.

Congratulations to winners:

- Julian F. - 1st Place Public Speaking 2
- Ava J. - 1st Place Public Speaking 1
- Farah R. - 2nd Place Basic Decision Making
- Casey S. - 3rd Place Client Services
- Jack H. - 4th Place Impromptu Speaking
- Nicholas W. - 4th Job Interview

Manya K. and Akarsh C. took part in the State Officer Exam. The results of this test will be out shortly and will determine if they move forward to representing Commack as New York State Officers. In addition, Marissa S. and Akarsh C. took the Future Business Leaders exam. This exam is a state competition, and we wish them well placing in the top ten. Those results will also be out shortly.

Manya K. took the State Leadership Exam and passed, she will now move on to Rochester as a candidate for the District Vice Presidency.

A second aspect of the FBLA Spring District Meeting Competition is virtual business tests. These tests consist of 50 questions and a 30 minute time limit on a range of professional topics.



Congratulations to these FBLA winners:

- Ben K. - 1st Place Banking and Finance
- Charlie K. - 1st Place Hospitality Management
- Sahaj P. - 1st Place Business Calculations
- Victoria W. - 1st Place Personal Finance
- Mehek S. - 2nd Place - Intro to Financial Math
- Max S. - 2nd Place Personal Finance
- Casey S. - 3rd Place Accounting 1
- Saharsh P. - 3rd Place Business Calculations

We also wish these students well as they continue on to Rochester to compete at a state level!

Blind Date - With A Book



The English Honor Society held its second annual Blind Date With A Book event. The honor society collected donated young adult novels and wrapped them for a fun interactive library experience. After wrapping the books, they set up a display in the library on Valentine's Day. Students could stop by during the day and blindly grab a book based on the short description and decorations the honor society added to the wrapping. Any books that were not selected were donated to Book Fairies, a charity that distributes books to local places in need. The event was a success and inspired students to read books they would not have picked out themselves.



PTA Reflections Winners - New York State Level

Commack has FOUR New York State winners this year out of 144 state-wide winners! Two of those winners are being advanced to the National level of the competition (New York State may only advance a total of 30 entries to National). Commack has had a tremendous showing and we could not be prouder.



Congratulations to: Lola D., Eli G., Jake K. and Mylo T.!

Coupons For Troopons - Making a Difference

Mrs. Eisner's class at CHS is making a difference by supporting our troops. Commack participates in the Coupons for Troopons program that sends manufacturer coupons to our troops overseas through supportourtroops.org.

In the last four months, over \$31,000 was donated by our community! If you would like to continue to support these efforts, please send coupons (only "Manufacturer's Coupons" can be used) from the newspaper, dispensers in grocery stores, tear-pads, and elsewhere. The coupons can be expired but within two months of expiring.

The students in Mrs. Eisner's class use many skills like cutting, sorting, adding values and giving to a good cause by participating in this program. Please continue to drop off or mail to: Mrs. Eisner, Commack High School, 1 Scholar Lane, Commack.



Indian Hollow Pajama Read-In



Indian Hollow kindergarten students gathered before school in their pajamas to listen to some great literature. Students listened to Principal, Mr. Simpson, read aloud the book *Paulie Pastrami Achieves World Peace*, by James Proimos. In addition, students sat with their classes while multiple staff members shared some of their personal favorites aloud. It was a special event for the kindergarten students who thought it was fun to be the only ones in the building.



Buddies For A Cause

The Commack Middle Schools Best Buddies Club led a community donation health and beauty drive. The club collected over 1000 items including soap, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes. All items collected were donated to the St. Anne's Outreach Program in Brentwood.

Best Buddies is a friendship club with opportunities to form positive relationships with peers through fun activities and community service.

Thank you to all students, staff, and families who donated and helped support the drive!

Drexel University Photography High School Contest Exhibition

Congratulations to Gavin P.! His photograph entitled "Phantom Melody" has been selected for the 2023 Drexel University Photography High School Contest Exhibition. He attended the opening reception in February at the Photography Facility on 33rd & Arch Streets in Philadelphia. His work was on display from February 4 through March 5, 2023. This is an amazing accomplishment considering Primis' piece was chosen out of 1000 entries across the nation.



CMS Disabilities Awareness Week



During Disabilities Awareness Week, the Middle School PTA sponsored Rohan Murphy, an inspirational speaker, to talk to all seventh and eighth grade students.

Rohan was born with deformed legs, which were amputated early in his life. His eighth grade teacher encouraged Rohan to meet his challenges head on. Rohan began wrestling in ninth grade and later went on to wrestle at Penn State. He told the students how he overcame adversity, and encouraged them to meet their own challenges and never give up.

Family Fitness Night at Rolling Hills



Family Fitness night was held at Rolling Hills on March 8, when families came to school for a night of fun and fitness. The evening was designed by physical education teacher Mrs. Fluger, and Movement in the Arts teachers, Mr. Brandofino and Ms. Varone.

Families got to experience Safety City activities that their children participated in during the month of March. Safety City's theme this year is Long Island, New York and represented ten different cities from our region. Some examples are the "Dix Hills Ice Rink" - our ice skating city, "Hoyt Farm" - our soccer city, "Madison Square Garden" / "UBS Arena" - our hockey city, "Bowlero" - our bowling city, "Urban

Air" - our obstacle course city and many more!

The event included relay races such as scooters, ice cream cone, soccer, and pancake. These relay races are also used during Rolling Hills field day which comes up in June!

Rolling Hills staff members joined in the fun, which was so enjoyable and a special treat for the students. The second grade Hills Helpers assisted in the evening by directing attendees to starting locations as well as helping to distribute water and snacks at the end. Thank you to our PTA parent volunteers for all of their help and support.

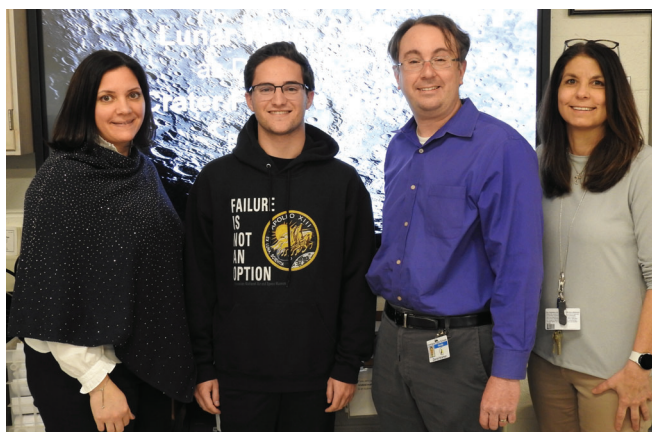
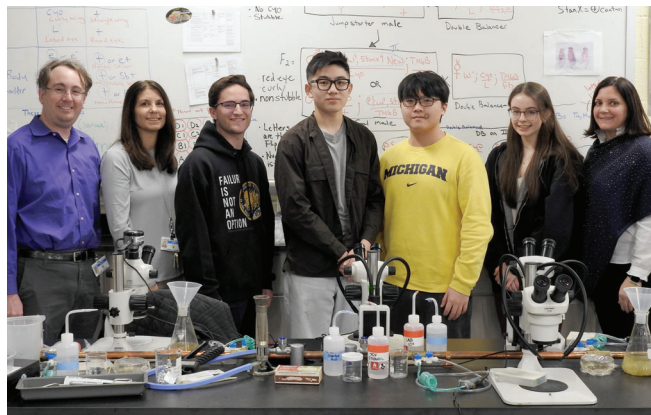
Science Accomplishments - #CommackProud

Four Commack High School science research students advanced to the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair's Round Two: Brandon B., Jin K., Anna R., and Jonathan Z.

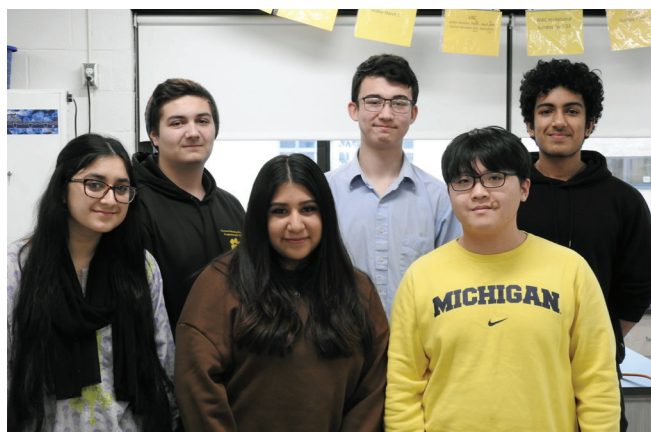
Congratulations to Grand Awards winners:

Brandon B. - NASA Earth System Science Award
3rd Place - Math, Physics, and Astronomy
Jin K. - US Agency for International Development Award
Honorable Mention - Animal Science
Anna R. - US Metric Award
Honorable Mention - Translational Medical Science
Jonathan Z. - 3rd Place - Behavioral and Social Science

More big science news! Five students advanced to Round 2 of the New York State Science and Engineering Fair. They are: Brandon B., Jin K., Jonathan Z., Shivani M., and Ishaan S



Senior Brandon B. was selected to present as a Regional Semi-finalist at the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium and placed 5th in Physics on Feb 12th at York College. His project, "Lunar Water Content as Determined by Crater Feature Analysis," includes high resolution photographs. He spends hours photographing the heavens and investigating outer space.



Maheen W., Matthew C., Tiffany G., Danial K., Jin K, Sahaj P., and Isadora A. (not in photo) were chosen to attend the Stanford University "StanMack" Research Symposium at Lawrenceville School in April, with peers from schools around the world. These students are part of a Stanford University and Commack High School Collaboration participating in the StanX program studying fruit fly genetics.

Esports For The Win!



Rocket League state playoff winners: Brian S., Daniel F., and Alvin L.

Commack High School's Rocket League Esports Team has completed their fall season by winning the New York State Championship! Congratulations to the team and their coach, high school art teacher, Rob Raeihle.



"This is a new avenue for our students to explore, playing in real-time in a highly competitive, nationwide league," Mr. Raeihle observed. "We began this club effort pre-Covid and funded it with a MegaGrant I wrote and won for \$25K through Epic Games. Grant money was used for equipment housed in our state-of-the-art Gaming Den where both Game Design courses are taught and Esports competitions take place. We now have over 50 student members playing in our seven competitive games. We compete in these matches on a weekly basis in the fall, spring, and summer leagues. It's truly amazing what we have been able to achieve in a little over a year."

Wood Park Spotlights Nutrition and Good Health



Wood Park staff and students celebrated Nutrition Week by putting the focus on fitness and good health.

There were Zumba classes in physical education classes in the gym, school-wide morning stretches and a very special visit from "Mrs. Carritson" (photo above right).



Fitness!



Dr. Seuss' birthday also fell during Nutrition Week with a special read aloud and craft from our very own Commack High School students.

To culminate our week of fun there was a school-wide assembly where we learned all about health and wellness through a show presented by Lee Night.

SOUPER BOWL to COMBAT HUNGER



We live in a very caring community which was evident in our schools during the annual "Souper Bowl" collection to combat hunger.

Students and staff collected thousands of cans of soup to donate to Long Island Cares to help families in need.

North Ridge

Mrs. Chiaino's second grade class won the North Ridge "Souper Bowl" with the most soup donated. In total, North Ridge was able to donate 2,178 cans of soup!



Sawmill

Congrats go to our third graders on winning Sawmill "Souper Bowl." These Sawmill rookies brought in 248 cans! Altogether, the school collected almost 500 cans that were donated.



Sawmill's 14th Annual Health and Wellness Day



Pictured are the students from Mrs. Catuosco's third grade class and Ms. Kelly Albanese Scherer, Yoga instructor.

Mandracchia Sawmill Intermediate School held its 14th annual Health and Wellness Day. This special event teaches students about healthy habits, health and wellness, and encourages everyone to participate in many different activities that improve their physical and mental well-being.

This year, 18 presenters from various local businesses, parents, high school students, and Sawmill staff volunteered to share their expertise with our students. Each class attended

two 40-minute sessions that varied from physical activities such as fencing, yoga, pickle ball, kickboxing, and dance. Presentations focused on informing our students about topics such as massage therapy, eye care, foot care, mindfulness, and cardiology.

Many thanks to all the presenters and all who volunteered their time and talents to help us make this a successful, educational, and fun-filled event!

Burr Students Lend a Helping Hand



Students in Mrs. Cestaro, Mrs. Maynard, Mrs. Barabino, and Mrs. Tamborino's class were motivated and even eager to earn money by doing extra chores at home to support the Helping Hands Rescue Mission.



Their donations, matched by their teachers, purchased toiletries (socks, gloves, toothbrushes, toiletry kits, etc). The students decorated shoe boxes, wrote good wishes and packed the items into colorful boxes, which were gratefully accepted at the Helping Hands Rescue Mission in Huntington.

Burr Intermediate School is known for its generosity in helping others. The students were so proud of their efforts and most importantly, grateful for the opportunity to lend a helping hand!

#CommackCougars

Congratulations to Commack's Winter League Winners:



Boys Basketball

Girls Bowling



Wrestling

Girls Fencing



Girls Winter Track & Field

National Champions

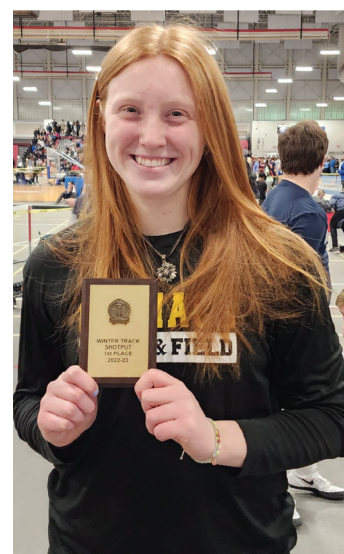


Congratulations to the Commack Cougarettes Kickline on their second national title! The team placed first in the Large Kick category at the NDA National Competition in Florida, and were welcomed home with a parade of firefighters, police, and lots of lights!

All-American

Commack senior Julie T. was crowned the 2023 NY State Indoor Shot Put Champion, defending her State Championship with a throw of 41 ft 8 1/2 in. She joins a small group of athletes to repeat as a State Champion.

Julie won the bronze medal to become an All-American in the Shot Put with a throw of 44 ft 2 in at the New Balance Indoor National Meet.



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Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program 2023-2024

The Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program (UPK) is fully funded by New York State grants. After April 1, 2023 and pending passage of the NYS Budget, the application will be posted on the Commack Website. The application must be submitted by May 1 in order to be included in the UPK lottery. There are a limited number of openings based upon the amount of grant money Commack receives from the State. The UPK half-day and full-day programs meet five days per week during the

school year at local preschools.

Students must reside in the district and be four years old on or before December 1, 2023, to be eligible to attend UPK in the fall of 2023. Students are selected utilizing a lottery system to ensure that all applicants have an equal opportunity for participation. A numerical waiting list is maintained. In the event of availability, families will be notified in the order in which their number was chosen.

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 School District

P.O. Box 150, Commack, NY 11725

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