



Commack Courier

A BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLICATION

We Welcome Our New Superintendent, Dr. Jordan Cox

The Commack School District Board of Education selected Dr. Jordan Cox as its new Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2022. Dr. Cox brings more than 20 years of experience in public education to the role, and he has worked as the District's Executive Director of Instructional Services since joining Commack Schools in 2018. Chief among Dr. Cox's goals as Superintendent of Schools is continuing the evolution of systems designed to best prepare students for life after graduation.

"My father once told me that as a child you have every door in the world open to you," Dr. Cox said. "You can be anything you want. My goal is to expose our students to as many open doors as possible while creating new ones and preparing them for life after high school. It's about giving our students incredible real-life experiences and moments to cherish each and every day they are in our schools and in our care."



Dr. Cox got his start in education as a teacher for the Harborfields Central School District. There, he went on to become an administrator, eventually serving as the district's executive director for instructional services. Dr. Cox has extensive experience overseeing K-12 curriculum, district-wide professional development, fiscally responsible budget practices, staff evaluation and technology.

"While we had many great candidates apply for the Superintendent of Schools position, it was clear that Dr. Cox brings an intimate knowledge of our District and possesses all of the leadership skills required for the continual success of Commack," said Steven Hartman, President of the Commack School Board.

First Annual Tribute to the Troops

Commack held its first Tribute to the Troops in honor of our nation's veterans and active armed service members on May 11. Taking place on Commack High School's newly dedicated Bryan Bonin Memorial Baseball Field, the ceremony is expected to become an annual tradition. The ceremony took place before the afternoon's high school baseball game, and representatives from the Army and Marines threw the first pitch. In addition to school officials, service members and veterans, attendees included Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney, Huntington Town Supervisor Ed Smyth, Suffolk County Legislator Rob Trotta, Suffolk County Legislator Leslie Kennedy, Suffolk County Comptroller John Kennedy, and Thomas McLaughlin, a representative from State Senator Mario Mattera's office.



COMMACK IN THE COURTROOM: CHS MOCK TRIAL TEAM IS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE COUNTY!

Commack High School’s Mock Trial program—an extracurricular activity in which students participate in rehearsed trials to learn about the legal system—recently competed in the New York State Mock Trial Competition and more than held their own by placing as a finalist in the Northport Law Day Competition. The CHS Mock Trial Team not only argued their way to the “sweet 16” but are now among the “elite 8” in Suffolk County. Congratulations to our mock trial students—Maggie A., Carley C., Matt C., Elias F., Meredith G., Erica H., Ava J., and Melody L.—as well as their advisor, Sandy Braun, and their attorney advisor, Tim Wan.



The success of the CHS Mock Trial Team comes at an exciting time, as the District recently announced the construction of a mock trial courtroom at Commack High School that will bring new, real-world learning opportunities to its students and expand career readiness options for the District. The courtroom construction is being made possible by a \$100,000 state grant secured by State Senator Jim Gaughran.

“We are excited to embark on this incredible programmatic milestone for our District,” said Dr. Jordan Cox, Superintendent of the Commack School District. “These funds will help us create a facility where our students will apply what they learn in the classroom in an authentic experience. We are grateful for the funds, and the ability to create real-world experiences.”

This facility will add to the team’s real-world experience by giving them a true courtroom setting. Additional benefits of creating the mock trial courtroom include boosting students’ valuable workspace readiness skills, employability, personal, professional, academic, and technical skills.

Commack High School’s Mock Trial program is a joint venture of the New York Bar Foundation, the New York State Bar Association, and the Law, Youth and Citizenship Program.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BEE CLUB ABUZZ WITH EXCITEMENT AT ARRIVAL OF NEW COLONY

For the avowed apiarist, there’s no sweeter sound of spring than the buzz of bees. Certainly the same can be said for our amateur apiarists in Commack Middle School’s Bee Club after working on such an exciting project at the Marion Carll Property. Under the careful watch of Master Beekeeper Katherine Luberto, the middle schoolers watched in awe at the arrival of hundreds of honey bees to the opening of a new apiary. Students and their advisor even had the opportunity to assist in transferring the queen bee along with the worker and nurse bees to their new hive. The Bee Club prepared for the arrival of the bees by learning how to care for their unique environment and creating the bee boxes and a special enclosure with the expertise of our facilities crew. To build on this authentic experience, students planted seedlings in their classrooms, which were transferred to the property for bee pollination. We eagerly await our first honey harvest in the fall of 2022!



Introducing Commack's First-of-its-Kind Career Path Program

It's no longer necessary for students to wait until after graduation to begin pursuing the careers that interest them. In Commack, we have the technology; the tools; the teachers; and, most importantly, the motivated students; to give the next generation of the American workforce an incredible head start. That's why we are so excited to announce that Commack is the first school district on Long Island to offer the International Baccalaureate® Career-related Programme (IBCP) to all students. The IBCP is designed for students in grades 11 and 12 interested in pursuing an education that provides them opportunities to engage in unique learning experiences relevant to their chosen field of study. This brand-new program allows students to choose specific, high-level coursework geared to their interests in a future career pathway. Preparing students to enter the world of the 21st century is a key foundation of the IBCP.

“This initiative will help guarantee that our high school students, instructors, and counselors can transform a unique, meaningful early college experience into sustained development in a field of study and career,” said Steven Hartman, President of the Board of Education.

The IB Career-related Programme will enhance the Commack School District's current IB Diploma offering to engage more students in meaningful and innovative work. Within the framework of the IB approach to learning, students have the opportunities to build skills that will make them highly



successful in whichever fields they choose to pursue after they graduate from Commack High School.

“This first-of-its-kind IB Career-related Programme will allow students to explore potential careers and discover a passion or interest, complete high school courses that specifically relate to with their planned post-secondary courses and programs, and develop skills to prepare them for the workforce,” said Dr. Jordan Cox, Superintendent of the Commack School District.

The District fully expects to expand the number of career pathways available in the IBCP each year, reaching even more students and allowing them to “try on” college and career-level learning while still enrolled in high school.

Commack Shines in Mathematics Competition

Six students from Commack High School were top finishers in the Mathematical Association of Americas American Mathematics Competitions (MAA AMC). The six students were:

AMC 12 Top 3 Scores:

- 1 - David Y.
- 2 - Kyeongsub J.
- 3 - Ryan P.

AMC 10 Top 3 Scores:

- Tied for 1st -
Adam F., James Y.
2nd- Mehek S.

Through classroom resources and friendly competition, the MAA AMC program helps America's educators identify talent and foster a love of mathematics. The MAA AMC program positively develops the analytical skills needed for future careers in an innovative society. The American Mathematics Competitions are a series of examinations and curriculum materials that build problem-solving skills and mathematical knowledge in middle and high school students.



SCIENCE SUCCESS

Spring Was Full of Incredible Feats of Scientific Ingenuity in Commack. Read on for Some Highlights!



On March 8, Commack seniors Lakshanna “Lexi” R. and Soyoun M. competed in Round 2 of the Long Island Science and Engineering Fair, or LISEF. Both students won the First Place Grand Awards in their category, making them part of Team LISEF, the group of twenty students chosen to represent Long Island at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). Ashley’s project led to her Grand Award in Animal and Plant Science, and Lexi’s project was the winning project in the Biochemistry and Microbiology category.

A few weeks later, on March 21st, Commack Science Research students competed in Round 2 of the New York State Science and Engineering Fair, or NYSSEF. Among our other winners, senior Ashley H. won the first place Grand Award in the category of Computational Biology and was also chosen as one of 15

finalists to represent New York State at ISEF, held in Georgia this May.

Although they took two different pathways to advance to the International Science and Engineering Fair, Soyoun, Lexi, and Ashley competed in the week-long event in Atlanta, GA. This year, ISEF welcomed 1,750 students, both virtually and in person, representing 1,410 projects and 63 countries, regions, and territories. All three students did Commack proud. Special recognition went to Lexi, who won International Third Place Grand Award in Microbiology. This win for her project, *Characterizing the Secretion of the Francisella tularensis protein FTL_1123*, which she investigated at the Thanassi Lab at SUNY Stony Brook, included a monetary award and the honor of being among the top young scientists worldwide.

SCIENCE AWARD WINNERS

REGENERON INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR

- Lakshanna R. – 3rd Place Grand Award, Microbiology (\$1,000)

NEUROLOGICAL SURGICAL P.C. HEALTH COMPETITION

- Ashley H. - 2nd Place, Computational Biology (\$4,000)
- Soyoun M. - Finalist (\$500)
- Harry P. - 3rd Place, Microbiology (\$3,000)
- David Y. - Finalist (\$500)

SCIENCE AWARD WINNERS

WAC HIGHLIGHTS

- Melina N. - 3rd Place, General Biology
- Lakshanna R. - 1st Place, Biochemistry
- Sahaj P. - 3rd Place, Chemistry
- Mitchel G. - 3rd Place, Earth and Environmental Science
- Arda A. and Ayan S. - 3rd Place, Computer Science

ENVIROTHON COMPETITION – 3RD PLACE IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

- Daniel F.
- Chloe G.
- Casey S.
- Amana G.
- Farah R.



WAC Winners



Envirothon

LONG ISLAND SCIENCE CONGRESS – SENIOR DIVISION

- Sarah F. – High Honors, Directors Award (\$50)
- Daphne K. - Honors
- Nicholas M. - Honorable Mention
- Grace P. - Honors

LONG ISLAND SCIENCE CONGRESS – JUNIOR DIVISION

- Jaclyn C. - Honors
- Amana G. - Honors
- Zaarah I. - High Honors, Director's Award (\$50)
- Ava J. - High Honors, Director's Award (\$50)
- Julia K. - Honors
- Emily K. - Honors
- Emma L. - Honors
- Daniel M. - Honors
- Shivani M. - Honors
- Nicholas P. - Honors
- Samie P. - Honors
- Kayla R. - Honors
- Lucas V. - Honors
- Akarsh C. - High Honors, Suffolk County Science Teachers Association Award (\$50)
- Aaron M. - High Honors, Suffolk County Science Teachers Association Award (\$50)
- Andrew M. - High Honors, Suffolk County Science Teachers Association Award (\$50)

SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S ALLIANCE SCIENCE FAIR

- Defne A. - Honorable Mention, Biological Sciences
- Rishin C. - Honorable Mention, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Grace K. - Honorable Mention, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Aareb J. - Honorable Mention, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- Shreya S. - Honorable Mention, Biological Sciences

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Wacky Wednesday at Indian Hollow

Everyone looks forward to Wacky Wednesdays at Indian Hollow! Whether it's mismatched clothing, pajamas, a funny hat, a crazy hairstyle, or a special school-wide event, the day is a memory in the making. School spirit is evident with all the staff, teachers and Principal Brian Simpson dressing up to elicit smiles from the children.



Book Murals Highlight Library Lane at North Ridge



Thanks to the visiting artist, Cathy Russell, the students of North Ridge Primary School were each able to create clay pieces for several large book murals which lined the school's Library Lane. For example, students created crayon figures that match the book characters from *The Day the Crayons Quit*, teddy bears that look like our dear bear from *Corduroy* and so forth. Before making the murals, students read and discussed the books. Next, they were taught how to use the clay and glaze to make the pieces. The project was supported by the North Ridge PTA as part of the Arts in Education program.

Mrs. Russell is a working artist whose creative talents can be seen in many of our schools. She created and assembled these magnificent murals in her home studio and our school installed them. They really are a fantastic addition to our library hallway.

Rolling Hills Primary Reads Across America

Recently, students at Rolling Hills Primary School celebrated Read Across America Day! The day centered around activities that bring the joy of reading to children and was held in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday. This year was extra special, as the children in Rolling Hills were joined by very special guests: Commack Middle School Honor Society students!

Rolling Hills students read Dr. Seuss books aloud and prepared activities for their friends at Commack Middle School. Students worked together in each classroom and truly enjoyed this unique special learning experience.



Environmental Artist Pays a Special Virtual Visit to Wood Park Primary School

Students at Wood Park Primary School had the unique opportunity to virtually meet environmental artist Tonito Valderrama, who specializes in Native American artwork. Using Terra Cotta clay, students designed pinch-pots, aquatic fish, and low-relief symbols!

Burr Biographies

Recently, in Ms. Emily Walther's fourth grade class at Burr Intermediate School, students were given the opportunity to choose a famous person in history on which to conduct research and write a report. The project was known as Burr Biographies. After the project, students were very excited when they heard that their hard work and dedication would be displayed at Commack's very own "Walther Wax Museum!" Students were able to dress up as their chosen historical figure, bringing in props and creating informational virtual plaques to display on their Chromebooks. Administration and fellow fourth grade classes were also able to walk through the wax museum.



Sawmill Students Love the Pen Pal Program

In the days of direct messaging and email, old fashioned pen pals can seem like a thing of the past. But it's precisely the novelty that make pen pal letters so much fun for young students! Children in Ms. Considine's and Ms. Salerno's classes at Sawmill Intermediate School recently participated in The Pen Pal Project through the United States Postal Service. The students were very excited to receive letters from their pen pals from another third grade class in Springfield, Illinois.



Choreography Class Conducted at Commack Middle School

Recently, the IB dance senior class conducted a choreography workshop at Commack Middle School, with IB dance teachers Mary Ellen Desmond and Edward Boll. The senior dance students spent a great deal of time conceiving, researching, and choreographing four original global issue-inspired dances as part of an IB dance project. The seniors presented the inspiration and intention behind these dances to the middle school students, before performing each piece for the audience.

After these performances, students were given the chance to partake in four interactive dance improv games, which were also developed and facilitated by the IB dance seniors. Finally, the middle schoolers had a chance to learn and perform a section of choreography from the IB dance seniors and engage with a large group presentation of this choreography, as the culminating activity of this fun and inspiring day.



MUSIC AND ART

Commack High School Student Artists Continue to Impress

The last few months in the art department of Commack High School have been highlighted by so many tremendous accomplishments by our students.

BAFFA HIGHLIGHTS:

- Deborah A.: won a \$500 scholarship for the Women Sharing Art Award
- Amelia P.: 2nd place for painting/acrylic
- Mateo D.: 3rd place for drawing/graphite

SCHOLASTIC ART AND WRITING COMPETITION:

- Deborah A. submitted three pieces—all acrylic paintings—and placed in each category. It's an incredible competition for only the best artists, and Deborah has proven time and time again that she is in the upper echelon of young artists.
- Polina K. was selected as an Honorable Mention in this extremely prestigious show. Her work was selected out of 135 submissions from 42 High School AP / IB Art programs.

PFLI - PHOTOGRAPHIC FEDERATION OF LONG ISLAND COMPETITION:

- Evelyn K., 1st place in the people and animal category titled "Pathing."
- Rayna K., 3rd place in the photojournalism category titled "Calm and Mindfulness."

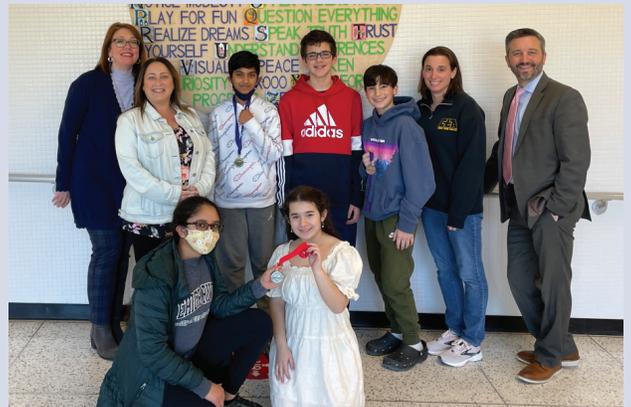
HUNTINGTON CAMERA CLUB:

- Marianna D. - 1st place "Patterns" category
- Gabrielle P. - Honorable Mention in the "Patterns" category



CMS Science Olympiad Students Stand Out at Regional Tournament

Commack Middle School Science Olympiad students along with their coaches, Debbie McNamara and Diane Cherney, competed in the regional tournament. Their dedication and hard work paid off: several our students placed in their respective events! Congratulations to: Rohan J., Green G., 1st Place; Sarah G. and Rishika S., Diseases Detectives, 2nd Place; Vincent D. and Kyle J., Mission Possible, 6th Place; and Elora M., Code Busters, 10th Place and Road Scholar, 7th Place.



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.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT COMMACKSCHOOLS.ORG