

Educational Horizons

APRIL 2014

pobschools.org PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Technology in Focus at Plainview-Old Bethpage School District

It is becoming increasingly obvious that a proclivity for technology is essential for a well-rounded, full life. Being adept at using current technology can distinguish an individual in a competitive job market and assist young people in making social and professional contacts. For schools, this is evident with the adoption of the Common Core Standards; the new curriculum stresses the importance of students using technology strategically and capably. Children in all grades must be able to employ technology to enhance their reading, writing, speaking and language use.

With this in mind, the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District is making technological enhancements at all levels. Tablets and 3D printers are being used in several classrooms. One of our more ambitious projects is the addition of ASUS tablets to many of our classes. With these powerful computers, students will be able to work on collaborative projects and documents, create slideshows and much more, positioning them for their post-high school experiences.

The technology education that students are receiving in POB schools is paying off in tangible, real-world ways. Last week, POB launched its first District app for smart

phones and tablets, and it was thanks to the ingenuity and talent of POBJFKHS senior Scott Smith. The app, completely designed and created by Scott, allows POB to exponentially improve communication between the administration and the community by pushing out breaking news and updates. Users will also be able to view school calendars and menus and receive weather alerts and school-closing information through the app. It is free, and can be downloaded from the app store. The app is available on all Apple and Android devices. Thanks to Scott, POB now has a unique 21st-century tool for communication.



Acquiring the knowledge and skills to develop apps has tremendous advantages for our students in an increasingly technological world. Another POBJFKHS student, freshman Mark Saglimbene, created an app on the program Xcode using the Photoshop skills he learned in his media arts class. Mark's app, called "Turtle Hurdles," took him 50 hours to complete.



These new technologies are not going away. It is imperative that students build fluency and learn how to navigate them. Plainview-Old Bethpage schools are working diligently to make sure that happens.



Freshman Wrestler Wins County Title; Places Second Statewide!

POBJFKHS freshman Peter Pappas did something no Plainview-Old Bethpage wrestler ever has: he made it to the final round of the New York State wrestling tournament, placing second overall in his weight class. Peter's accomplishment is particularly amazing considering no POB wrestler had even made it to the semifinals since 1979. Peter also won the Nassau County Wrestling Championship, something no POB wrestler had done since 1998. The incredible showing at the State tournament, as well as the victory at the county championships, is a testament to Peter's talent and work ethic, as well as to the excellent work by his coach, Joe Weinstein. Congratulations to Peter and Coach Weinstein!



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Superintendent's Message



Annually, districts engage in a struggle to find the right balance in maintaining effective programs and services while keeping cost increases to a minimum. As I pen this message, we are looking over our state aid that was just released and being thankful for the work our Long Island State legislators have put into bringing home more of our share in state aid. Despite what we believe will be negative long term effect brought on by the Governors plan for a tax freeze, we are grateful that our legislators saw the need to advocate for more funds to help us fulfill our obligations. This will help us remain under the tax levy cap for this year's budget.

In the weeks approaching the budget vote on May 20, you will hear and read much about our efforts to provide the most comprehensive and responsible budget possible. What we must not neglect in the bustle of budget season, however, is our responsibility to highlight the wonderful achievements made by our students on a daily basis. In this newsletter we have the opportunity to share some of the good news occurring all over the district. Our focus on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs is paying dividends with our new Districtwide iPhone app, created entirely by high school senior Scott Smith (see cover story). Our athletes are reaching heights never before achieved, our community has been recognized as one of the best places for Music Education in the country, the high school store has been recognized as one of the best in the country, and our schools are coming together to raise money for many worthwhile causes. At all levels, our students are demonstrating stellar citizenship and sportsmanship, musical and artistic talents, critical thinking, research skills and exceptional academic prowess.

The sole focus of our Board of Education and administration in preparing the 2014-15 budget is on the needs of our students. We work diligently to preserve the exceptional qualities that distinguish Plainview-Old Bethpage schools, the unique experiences offered through outstanding programs and services, because they have proven time after time to work so well. Our students' successes serve as evidence of their effectiveness.

Thanks to these programs, the dedicated work of our staff, and the ongoing support of parents and community members, I have no doubt that Plainview-Old Bethpage students are well-prepared for their post-high school experiences; college as well as the work places they will lend their talents.

I urge each of you to stay informed about what is happening in this District. Please mark your calendar now, and be sure to vote on May 20. I also encourage you to read this newsletter carefully, follow us on Twitter (@pobschools), and download our new District app from the Apple App Store or Google Play!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lorna R. Lewis
Superintendent of Schools

Winners and Achievers

Class of 2014 Valedictorian and Salutatorian Announced!

Reva Butensky and Nicolette Almer are the POBJFKHS Class of 2014 valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively. Reva was awarded a National Merit Commendation, received the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Medal for mathematics and science excellence, and is the president of her school's National Honor Society. Nicolette was named a National Merit Commended Scholar and was a recipient of the American Chemical Society for Outstanding Achievement in High School Chemistry. Congratulations to Reva and Nicolette!

POBJFKHS Student Joins Prestigious National Program

New York Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand recently announced that Plainview-Old Bethpage John F.



Kennedy High School student Benjamin Chasan has been selected to one of the most prestigious, exclusive programs in the country. Ben was named a delegate in the 52nd Annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP), held in Washington, D.C.

Ben is one of only two students from New York State, and 104 from across the country, to be invited to attend this program. He participated in an intensive, week-long study of the federal government. Additionally, Ben and the other delegates were each awarded a \$5,000 scholarship. The goal of the program, according to USSYP, is to instill in the student delegates a deeper understanding of the American political process and to inspire them to a lifelong commitment to public service.

POB's Music Education Among Best in Nation

The Plainview-Old Bethpage School District has been recognized for its outstanding commitment to music education with a Best Communities for Music Education (BCME) designation by the NAMM Foundation. POB is one of just 346 districts nationwide to receive the honor this year.

Now in its 15th year, the BCME affirms that school districts have demonstrated exceptional efforts toward maintaining music education as part of the school's core curriculum. The BCME survey requires districts to answer detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs.

What's Happening in Our Schools

K-Center Students Learn About Weather

In a program that integrated science, literacy, technology and art, children at the **Kindergarten Center** have been learning about the seasons and the weather, with an emphasis on wind. They have been reading and discussing books and poems, including the popular book *The Wind Blew* by Pat Hutchins. Among the children's activities were sequenced stories on the Smart Board; created story maps, mini-books and class books; watched video segments about how wind is formed on Discovery Education Streaming; experimented with wind tubes; and constructed their own paper kites. The science of weather and meteorology is a fascinating subject for children and adults alike, and K-Center students had a wonderful time learning about the world around them.



Students Look Into the Future

On March 7, students at **Old Bethpage Elementary School** celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday by reading his books and exploring his passion for originality, creativity and innovation. At the event, children listened to guest lecturers discuss topics related to the District's STEAM initiative. In attendance were several professionals from the technology field. Guest readers, including Board of Education members and Superintendent Dr. Lewis, shared details about their jobs. The community role models inspired the students, enlightening them with regard to the endless possibilities of their futures.



Parkway Students Construct Model Boats

First graders at **Parkway Elementary School** recently built their own model boats. After their boats were completed, the students tested the boats' buoyancy by putting them in tanks and adding marbles to the ships. Throughout the process, children learned new vocabulary words, including mass, density and buoyancy. Not only was the boat-building lesson a fun project, but it integrated three key STEAM disciplines. The design and construction of the vessels incorporated technology, the adding and subtracting of the marbles used math skills, and the usage of new vocabulary words to write about the project trained the students' English acumen.



American Indian History Celebrated at Pasadena

Earlier this year, the exciting program *Journeys Into American Indian Territories* came back to **Pasadena Elementary School**. Fourth graders learned about American Indian traditions and histories through an in-house field trip. During the event, students made duck decoys and other art work, observed Native American artifacts, and listened to folktales and legends. The activities were designed to move instruction beyond stereotypes and teach children about the important contributions American Indians have made to our society.



Kids on the Block Teaches Powerful Message

Students at **Stratford Road Elementary School** recently attended the Kids on the Block program, an innovative event that uses puppets to teach young children about students with disabilities such as autism, ADD/ADHD, blindness, deafness and mobility issues. Kids on the Block is run by POBJFKHS teacher Dianna Procida; the puppeteers are high school students. It was an inspiring event that gave the children valuable insight into the different types of people they encounter in their school and community. Thank you to Ms. Procida and the talented high school students.



The Wizard of Oz a Hit at MMS

For three nights in late March, the **Mattlin Middle School** Drama Cadets wowed sold-out audiences with an impressive performance of *The Wizard of Oz*. Under the direction of Tom Bonica – who unfortunately had to leave the production early due to an accident – the Drama Cadets breathed new life into the timeless story. Students participated in all aspects of the performances. They sang and danced, helped construct the sets and designed the costumes. All in attendance agreed: the show was a hit. Each performance was met with a standing ovation. Congratulations to our talented middle school students for a terrific show.



What's Happening in Our Schools

POBMS Project Named Best on Long Island!

A team comprising seventh and eighth graders at **Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School** recently took first place in the Odyssey of the Mind Regional Competition, distinguishing them as the top team on Long Island. The students were tasked with solving problems that incorporated creative design with technical thinking. Their final project impressed the judges with its innovative design, striking aesthetics and display of technical aptitude. The team will next head to the state competition in Binghamton. The Odyssey of the Mind is an international program that provides problem-solving opportunities for students at all levels. Thousands of students from throughout the U.S. and countries all over the world participate. Congratulations to team members Gabrielle Calderon, Sam Coleman, Vidushi Dugar, Briana Garil, Melanie Roth, Sydney Schmidt and Jenna Turini, as well as coaches Joanna Gentile and Paula Engel on this impressive accomplishment.



The Hawks Nest: One of America's Best School Stores

School-Based Enterprises (SBE) are effective educational tools that help prepare students for the transition to college and career. SBEs represent the first work experience for many students, and they help others build leadership and time-management skills. This is certainly the case at **POBJFKHS**. The school store, the Hawk's Nest, received Gold Level Certification by DECA, distinguishing it as one of the best SBEs in the entire country. It's a commendable achievement; only 160 SBEs nationwide receive this distinction. Congratulations to all involved.



MUSIC AND ART NEWS

POB Music Faculty Performs for Elementary School Students

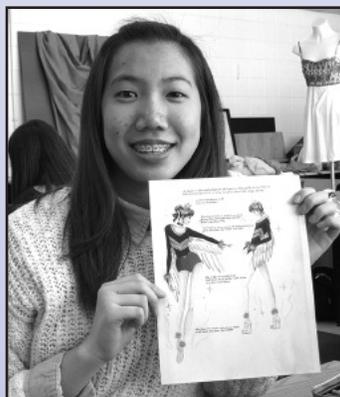
In an effort to foster a love of music in our youngest students, music faculty members in the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District visited all of our District third graders at Stratford Road Elementary School in March and put on a concert. In addition to performing, the music teachers talked to the children about the various instruments, gave demonstrations and answered questions. They specifically chose instruments that are offered for study in the District's band and orchestra programs.

The concert was an introduction to music study and a way to inspire a lifetime appreciation for music. Thank you to our music faculty for sharing the joy of music with students and to Stratford Road for hosting the event.



Award-Winning Artists at POB!

POBJFKHS student Jane Sohn won a silver honorable mention in the 2014 Cornell Fashion Design Contest. The contest, titled "Fashion Goes Super Human," tasked students with creating a runway garment inspired by their favorite athletes. Congratulations to Jane!



Esther Park, a senior at POBJFKHS, was named one of the High School Artists of Excellence in the CW Post – Advanced Visions Exhibition. The exhibition showcased the best artwork from AP art classes throughout Nassau and Suffolk County, as well as New York City. Congratulations Esther!

