

Educational Horizons

FEBRUARY 2014

pobschools.org PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOURTH GRADER'S VOICE HEARD AT POB LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Plainview-Old Bethpage School District's recent Legislative Breakfast brought together parents, Board of Education members, teachers and administrators from the POB and Syosset School Districts. The breakfast was coordinated by both District's Parent-Teacher Associations, Teachers' Unions and Administrators' Unions. Also in attendance were prominent politicians, including New York State Senators John Flanagan and Carl Marcellino, New York State Assemblyman Charles Levine and Congressman Steve Israel. But it was the voice of one courageous fourth grader that stole the show.

Stratford Road Elementary School student Mia Ehrlich took the podium during the event, which was called to address the changes in state aid as well as the new assessments, and bravely gave voice to the challenges students face. "The testing is so hard that it hurts my head," Mia said. "The testing is worse than other tests. It's too hard! If they need to do testing, they should make it easier."



Mia's words demonstrated a courage that belied her age. Wherever you stand on the issue of assessments, it's hard not to be impressed by her actions. Congressman Steve Israel was so moved by the speech that he wrote a letter to Mia on the spot, indicating that he would like to come to her classroom and discuss the issue with the children. Mia exemplifies the students of the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District: strong-willed, curious and passionate about education. What she said at that assembly underscores a valuable truth: in the context of the changing direction of education, the most important voices can sometimes be lost in the shuffle. It's the students, after all, who are most affected by these mass changes; their comments and concerns should be heard.

POBJFKHS Student Named Intel STS Semifinalist



Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School student Reva Butensky was recently named a semifinalist in the Society for Science & the Public's 2014 Intel Science Talent Search (STS) program. Reva was selected for her research project titled *Evaluation of Novel Polyacrylamide Gel for Studies on Biological Redox Reactions*. Each year, only 300 students nationwide are recognized as semifinalists.

From the group of 300 semifinalists, 40 will be invited to an event in Washington, D.C. in March, where they will present their projects to a panel of judges, display their work to the public, and meet with notable scientists. One winner will be selected and awarded the grand prize of \$100,000. The Intel STS is the nation's most prestigious pre-college science competition. Alumni of the competition have made extraordinary contributions to science; collectively they hold more than 100 of the world's most distinguished science and math honors, including the Nobel Prize and the National Medal of Science. Reva Butensky's nomination as a semifinalist is a tremendous accomplishment to her and the entire Plainview-Old Bethpage School District. Congratulations to Reva, and her research teacher MaryLou O'Donnell!



Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District

Administrative Offices • Washington Avenue • Plainview, NY 11803
pobschools.org

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Superintendent's Message



It was Margaret Mead who once said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." The legislative forum held at POBJFKHS on Saturday, February 1, 2014 demonstrated the power of the collaborative efforts of parent and staff to engage legislators with the real issues affecting our children's future. Kudos to all for making this event a stellar success, and in particular we applaud Cheryl Dender, PTA Council President, for spearheading this effort.

The two communities of Syosset and Plainview-Old Bethpage spoke passionately about our loss of State Aid as well as the emotional impact of the excessive use of testing in our classrooms. The recently announced Governor's proposal for State Aid will leave our District with less State Aid than was allocated in 2009. In fact, over the past three years we have lost over six million dollars in aid. While the governor speaks of a surplus, we are bound to develop our budget with a tax cap of under 2% this year. Senators Marcellino and Flanagan, Assemblyman Lavine and Congressman Israel left with a strong message from our communities: "Bring us back our fair share of State Aid and fix the broken NYSED assessment system." We must keep the pressure on so that solutions to both issues are forthcoming.

We have so much to safeguard in this year's budget. Your Board of Education and administration are working diligently to prepare a fiscally responsible budget for the 2014-15 school year. Striking the right balance between meeting the educational needs of our students, while minimizing the impact on taxpayers, is always a formidable task. The input of parents and community members is essential to achieving this balance. Now is the perfect time to become an active participant in your school District. The Board of Education will hold several budget meetings between now and the budget vote on May 20. (See schedule to the right.) These meetings are an opportunity for every member of the Plainview-Old Bethpage community to voice your concerns.

Please stay informed by logging on to our District website at www.pobschools.org — and follow us on Twitter! In addition, if you have questions, you may use the "Ask the Supt" button on our website and I will be sure to respond in a timely manner. I am looking forward to seeing you at one of the many events on our calendar. Thank you for your continued support of our schools.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lorna R. Lewis
Superintendent of Schools

Stay Informed with POB's District Twitter!

In an effort to improve communication with the Plainview-Old Bethpage community, we created a District Twitter account last year. Our handle is @pobschools. The main purpose of our account is to provide parents and the POB community with information on school and District events; student awards, recognitions and commendations; closings and delays; weather-related issues; as well as important educational articles and publications. We'd like to invite all of you who use Twitter to follow us and stay connected with the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District. So log on, sign up and follow us @pobschools!

Join Us For Our Third Annual Parent University!

Tuesday, March 4

Go to our District website and click *Quick Links* for course and schedule descriptions.

2013-2014 Board of Education Budget Meetings

Monday, February 24

Monday, March 10

Monday, March 17

Wednesday, April 9 - Budget Adoption

Monday, April 28

Wednesday, May 7 - Budget Hearing

Tuesday, May 20 - Budget Vote

Reminder About Snow Removal

In the light of the recent swath of winter weather, we'd like to ask that all members of the Plainview-Old Bethpage community remember to shovel all walkways in front of their property, especially if that area includes a bus stop. Making our roadways and sidewalks safe and accessible is a community effort; we should all do our part.

What's Happening in Our Schools

Building a Strong Math Foundation

At Plainview-Old Bethpage's **Kindergarten Center**, children are developing an understanding of basic mathematical concepts and skills through a variety of approaches. They count to 100, complete math games and worksheets, and practice basic addition and subtraction using math manipulatives, a system that teaches young children math concepts through developmentally appropriate and hands-on methods. The Common Core Standards for Mathematics are also reinforced through carefully selected children's literature incorporating math. For many students, math can be a challenging subject. By building a solid understanding of math concepts and their applications at a young age, however, children develop a mathematical foundation that will greatly help them as they progress through school.



Work on Writing Showcases the Importance of the Written Word

Last fall, **Old Bethpage Elementary School** took part in their annual Work on Writing, or WOW, campaign. The schoolwide celebration encourages students, teachers and family members to embrace writing through workshops, assignments and projects. The theme for this year's WOW event, *How Do You Measure UP?*, combined writing and math.



Children's writer Jerry Pallotta, author of books such as *The Ocean Alphabet Book* and *The Crayon Counting Book*, came to OBE to present assemblies for all grade levels. He visited with fourth graders to conduct hands-on workshops that demonstrated the ways in which math and writing are connected. Students throughout the school also completed projects with their families, including mapping a room in their homes, planning menus using supermarket brochures, and writing recipes. The week culminated with a PTA-hosted performance of Petra Puppet Show for all students: Money Math Mania.

History Through Art at Stratford Road

Recently, children at **Stratford Road Elementary School** have been learning about the storied history of New York State in an exciting way: through art and music. It's part of a program created by the organization Symphony Space, which teaches students about their past by integrating social studies, English, engineering, music and art. As part of their study, students took enlightening field trips to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Symphony Space Theatre in New York City. In addition, several artists visited Stratford Road and gave lessons on state history incorporating music, art, dancing and acting. Among them was historical musician Linda Russell, who discussed the considerable impact music has had on New York's history and played the dulcimer to highlight songs of the past. Ms. Russell also showed the children how to construct their own homemade instruments, joining with them as they played together.



Saying Thanks on Valentine's Day

Hundreds of students at **Parkway Elementary School** prepared for the recent Valentine's Day holiday by showing their gratitude for our country's service men and women. In a program sponsored by Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano, Parkway students wrote personal messages and created personal drawings on construction paper. The letters and artwork was distributed to veterans in hospitals and nursing homes throughout the region in time for Valentine's Day. The program also helped students practice their handwriting and enhance their creativity. The sacrifices our veterans make for our country should never go unnoticed. By taking time out of their day to honor those veterans, the young students at Parkway set an example for everyone to follow.

Students Raise Trout at Pasadena

There are some unusual new pets at **Pasadena Elementary School** this year. In an effort to teach children about the importance of conservation, fourth-grade students in Ms. Patanjo and Ms. Winter's classes are raising trout in the classroom throughout the school year. The children received the fish eggs in November. They will continue to watch them develop throughout the winter and early spring, and will release adolescent trout into the wild in May.

The lesson is a creative way for students to learn about the early stages of the life cycle. By maintaining a clean and hospitable habitat for the trout, students are also learning about the importance of environmental conservation. On Valentine's Day, all of the students named their own fish and wrote letters expressing what they had learned through caring for it.



New Mattlin Club Builds Positive School Atmosphere

Middle school is an essential period of transition for students as they prepare for high school and college. **Mattlin Middle School's** new Pride Approach Club is providing opportunities for students to develop into mature adults. Pride Approach was created to offer students a safe place to share their views and opinions without fear of judgment. The new club will focus on improving school climate and will provide a forum for students to discuss and learn about topics such as bullying, harassment, friendship and mentoring. Students in the club are also creating a Cyber Team that will speak to younger students and their parents about internet and texting safety, as well as cyberbullying. As part of their training, members of the team attended Long Island University's Kids in Action conference.

POBMS Book Club Celebrates Literature and Acceptance

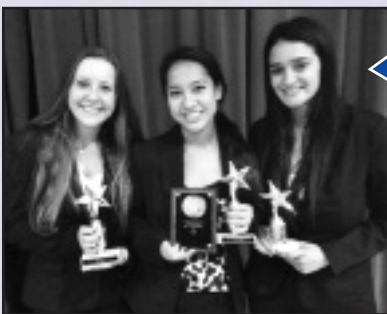
Promoting a love for reading is one of the most important roles of a school district because reading is the key to lifelong learning. Students at **Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School** had the opportunity to expand their reading experience by participating in this year's POBMS Book Club.

Both students and their parents were invited to read R.J. Palacio's acclaimed *Wonder*, the story of a young boy born with facial abnormalities and the challenges he faces as he attends public school for the first time. In December, everyone met for breakfast to discuss the book. Students worked with peer leaders to examine the major themes and topics of the novel, while parents gathered separately to do the same. The two groups then came together, and, using the message of the book, created an uplifting statement which was displayed in the main lobby of the school.



Budding Entrepreneurs Compete at POBJFKHS

Last December, the **Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School** Business Honor Society held its third annual POB Challenge, bringing together students from six different high schools to participate in a series of events that tested their entrepreneurial skills. Organized by POBJFKHS students Joshua Bloom, Adam Gross, Alix Katz, Brett Pinsky, Benjamin Weiss and Sydney Wasserman, who spent months preparing for the event, the POB Challenge featured students from Half Hollow Hills East and West, Wantagh, and Sachem East and North.



Each high school was represented by teams of three. Each team created a unique restaurant using only the information provided, then presented its results to a panel of judges consisting of business and law professionals. For the final round, the top four teams moved on to the auditorium, where they presented their work to other students. In addition, all participants listened to a guest lecture by Steven Pinsky of Quaker Per Group, who offered his advice on how to become successful entrepreneurs. At the end of the day, all the projects were scored and ranked. The POB Challenge was a great success, and, even though the top spot went to a team from Half Hollow Hills West, it spoke volumes to the determination and imagination of the POBJFKHS students who organized it. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Community Outreach Programs Abound in POB

Just because the holidays are long gone doesn't mean that ideals like kindness and self-sacrifice should be pushed aside. Students and teachers in the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District know this, and over the past few months have selflessly donated their time and effort to helping out their community.

Students at Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School recently held their annual DECA Fashion Show.

The event, which featured DECA students walking down the runway in formal wear provided by Max and Gino's, Vanilla Sky and Men's Wearhouse, was completely organized and managed by students. The fashion show raised over \$750 for the Ronald McDonald House, a

nonprofit organization that provides assistance to pediatric cancer patients and their families across the nation. The event was a great opportunity for the students that allowed them to help out people in need while learning valuable business-management skills.



For the last two years, guidance counselors at POBJFKHS have worked with members of the outreach committee of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church to "adopt" families in need during the holiday season. Under the direction of Betty Iannotti, a social worker for the high school, the counselors identified deserving families in the Plainview-Old Bethpage community and formulated a list of products to donate to those families. The drive this year was a tremendous success, with merchandise, food and gift cards going to those in need.

At Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School, students recently hosted a ceremonial Veterans Tea, which recognized more than 30 local military veterans and honored them for their service and sacrifice to our country. Student leaders in eighth grade served the veterans tea and homemade bread, cake, and pastries. In addition, the POBMS student choir performed at the event and collected products to donate to the Beacon House, an organization that provides essential items for homeless veterans. The Veterans Tea was a great way to instill the importance of respecting America's service men and women, while also teaching them about event planning and organizing. These events, along with other programs held continuously throughout the District, clearly demonstrate the compassion, drive and initiative of Plainview-Old Bethpage students. They illustrate a fundamental truth about public education: it's not only about what students learn in the classroom; it's also about how they apply what they learn to make a difference in their community.

Developing Math Fluency

Fun, Noncompetitive Challenges Improve Skills

With the implementation of the new Common Core math standards, much has been written and discussed regarding math fluency. Put simply, math fluency is the ability to recall answers to basic math facts automatically and without hesitation. Improving math fluency in younger students has been a focal point of teachers in our District. But why is it so important?

Research has shown that the capacity to recall basic math facts quickly and accurately is necessary for students to attain higher order math skills. Studies have also shown that poor math fluency can impede participation in math class discussions, problem solving, and the development of everyday life skills.

In the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District, math fluency is being addressed in a number of ways. Teachers are using math "sprints," interactive games and schoolwide challenges. During games such as the math sprints, students compete against themselves; they strive to beat their personal best, not outscore other classmates. This is done to improve math fluency without putting students under pressure.

Improving math fluency doesn't have to happen only in the classroom; students can practice it at home during everyday activities. Additionally, there are websites such as www.mathwire.com/numbersense/bfacts and apps such as Math Giraffe. For more recommended ideas, links, and apps, please visit the Mathematics Department section of our District website and click the *Fluency* tab on the left.

MUSIC AND ART NEWS

Student Musicians From Across the District Perform at Countywide Festival

Each year, the Nassau Music Educators Association (NMEA) All-County Music Festival showcases the talent of dedicated student musicians all across Nassau County. Being asked to perform at this festival is a considerable accomplishment, one that speaks volumes to both the ability and hard work of the selected students, as well as to the commitment of their music teachers. This year, the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District sent 126 students to perform at the prestigious festival.

The students were chosen for participation based on a combination of their musical performances, letters of recommendation from their teachers, and New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Solo Festival scores. Selected musicians spent weeks rehearsing with students from across the county, culminating in a performance at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts in January.

Congratulations to all of our outstanding music students:

Mattlin Middle School

Band: Elijah Blum, Minkang Choi, Minjee Kim, Joshua Martin and Zachariah Samuel

Chorus: Arushi Bhatia, Lindsay Brenner, Kayla Kirchenberg, Jake Meyers, Sierra Miles, Matthew Orgel, Trinity Pascarella, Jasbina Sabharwal and Amie Spatz

Orchestra: Lauren Eterno, Gabriela Feijoo and Sara Takahasi

Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School

Band: Lauren Brandenstein, Emily Howell, Gregory Kies, Jungin Lee and Evan Ressel

Chorus: Selin Baytan, Ryan Boody, Ethan Budd, Christine Chai, Christine Gonzalez, Cooper Levine, Nicolette Levine, Kevin Lynch, Laura Newman, Ian O'Neill, Maxwell Shackman, Emily Stone, Bailey Vader, Katherine Wang, Haley Wynne and Matthew Yoon

Orchestra: Erin Kim, Joseph Kim, Justin Kim, Ryan Kim, Stanley Kim, Brian Lee, Ellisa Lee and Luran Park

Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School

Band: Cassandra Edelstein, Zachary Goldstein, Robert Gough, Matthew Leo, Jordan Rinder, Gabriel Salzman, Tamara Saxman, Claire Shamul, Joshua Wicker and Matthew Wieselthier.

Chorus: Jasmine Anastasiadis, Bailey Bravin, Bryan Davidson, Bari Dershowitz, Paige Friedman, Jenna Goerke, Rachel Goerke, Stephanie Handschu, Samuel Howell, Benna Jacob, Berlin Jacob, Samantha Jessop, Kristin Lunt, Lindsay Paris, Natalie Towba, Elizabeth Varghese and Megan Wolyniec

Mixed Chorus: Channin Amelia, Alexandra Baker, Nicole Brenner, Trisha Chabria, Michael Clinton, Matthew Dershowitz, Nicole Faraci, Matthew Goldman, Emory Granat, Jordan Hecht, Giselle Hernandez, Jennie Kang, Grace Kim, Brandon Kurnit, Matthew Kurnit, Sydney Kurnit, Alyssa Lubrano, Jaymie Lunt, Andrew Miller, Samuel Miller, Dana Osborn, Gabrielle Picard, Alexander Resnick, Ethan Scherrer, Jason Sims, Julia Sternberg, Emma Taubenfeld, Olena Trojanowski, Olena Trojanowski, Julia Tsvyakh, Athina Vrosgou and Amanda Wittels

Orchestra: David Gallub, Harrison Hahn, Amanda Hedgecock, Courtney Hedgecock, Crystal Kim, Aaron Knoll, Gyuri Lee, Benjamin Ozur, Michelle Shin, Sabrina Song, Justin Tung, Irene Constantinidis, Gabriela DeOliviera, Gabrielle Dworkin, Emma Gold, Amanda Goldstein, Melanie Hornstein, Elana Laster, Carly Schindler, Sydney Schwartz, Samantha Seidita and Jessica Senzer

POBMS Students Celebrate Peace Through Art

Eighth graders at Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School recently took part in the Lions International Peace Poster Contest, expressing their visions for world peace by creating artwork. The theme for this year's poster contest was *Our World, Our Future*.

The posters were judged on their message, originality and artistic merit. Five POBMS students were distinguished for their work; Esther Kand, Michelle Ng and Julia Park took first, second, and third place, respectively, while Lauren Sieloff and Christine Gonzalez were awarded honorable mentions. Congratulations to each of these student-artists and their art teachers!

The Lions Clubs International (LCI) is a secular organization with nearly 50,000 clubs and over 1 million members in 205 countries worldwide. Founded in Illinois in 1917, LCI aims to serve the needs of communities on a local and global scale.

