

# The Bulletin Board

News from the Hicksville UFSD

## *new*Programs



### Safe at HOME Base

Aligned with goals that were set by district administration last year, the middle school has introduced an advisory program known as HOME Base — Hicksville's Outstanding Middle School Experience. The program, which was developed following a year of planning, aims to create a stronger sense of community at the middle school.

HOME Base is designed to serve various purposes: it is a setting in which respectful and caring relationships are developed; a safe and judgment-free place; an opportunity to help students feel connected to the school community; a time to regroup, relax and rejuvenate for the remainder of the day; and a forum where an adult is available to offer individual support and guidance to students.

The program is comprised of a 15-minute break between periods 2 and 3 — a time that was selected to provide students with a morning break at a point when they were settled into the school day. During that time, small groups of students meet with the same teacher throughout their years at the middle school.

"The purpose of this program is to provide every student with one adult who knows him or her well and provides steady support personally and academically," said Principal Mara Jorisch.

### Hitting the Pre-K Lottery

This year, the district has been able to extend its prekindergarten learning opportunities to include a lottery-based program housed at Dutch Lane and at no additional cost to taxpayers. The lottery was held in the spring and yielded a total enrollment of 72 students in four classes upon the start of the academic year.

"The Board is very proud to have launched this quality prekindergarten initiative that will help improve third grade literacy, an overall district goal," said Board of Education President Phil Heckler. "As educators know, children learn to read until third grade. After that, they read to learn. If they are not at grade level in reading by third grade, children will fall further behind in all subjects every year thereafter."

Quality prekindergarten programs are important in providing students opportunities to learn through play, and to develop critical social skills to help ensure ease of transition to kindergarten and beyond. Students who are enrolled in the district lottery program or in the SCOPE program (a tuition-based program offered to families not selected by the lottery at Burns Avenue and Woodland) are given these opportunities to gain the confidence to be challenged, work cooperatively with peers and learn problem-solving skills.



The district's prekindergarten teachers focus on Intentional Teaching, where they plan thoughtful and purposeful learning experiences to support the social and emotional, cognitive, physical and creative development of students.

The program is aligned with the HighScope Curriculum, which emphasizes active learning and focuses on positive interactions among children, as well as the interactions between children and adults.

To ensure that the prekindergarten program is built upon a strong foundation, the district has partnered with the Child Care Council of Nassau to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators. These sessions highlight the social and emotional needs of prekindergartners, effective teaching practices and the importance of developmentally appropriate classroom lessons.

# STEMming for Success

Students at the middle and high schools are being exposed to in-depth components of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) — a multifaceted growing field — through an extensive slate of courses and opportunities for academic enrichment. STEM learning is important because it prepares students for a world that is surrounded by science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Many professions require the skills that STEM education is designed to teach, and students who are proficient in STEM ultimately graduate high school both college- and career-ready.

At the middle school, students in grades six and seven are enrolled in general science, and their technology classes are designed to prepare them for the advanced lessons in their final years:

- **Sixth-grade technology:** Students are tasked with projects that require them to design, draw and produce, including creating a mag-lev vehicle, CO<sub>2</sub> dragster and egg drop.
- **Seventh-grade technology:** Students participate in the Module Scan Tech program, through which they cycle through modules — including a weather monitoring station, bridge building, pneumatics and computer-

aided design — intended to introduce them to various STEM careers.

- **Seventh-graders** also have the option of enrolling in a science research elective.

All eighth-grade students are accelerated in science — enrolled in one of two high school-level courses — and have two technology electives:

- **Eighth-grade science:** Students are enrolled in either Honors Earth Science or Regents Living Environment during their final year at the middle school.
- **Eighth-grade technology:** Students can learn about robotics or woodworking.
- **Eighth-graders** also have the option of enrolling in a science research elective.

At the high school, students have a multitude of opportunities to significantly build upon the foundation of science and technology education they formed at the middle school:

- **STEM program:** STEM students are currently enrolled in a triple period



of Advanced Placement Chemistry and Science Research.

- **Grade 9-12 science:** Specialized classes in living environment, earth science, chemistry and physics, all available to students at the Regents and Honors levels.
- **AP courses:** Advanced, college-level classes in physics, biology, chemistry and environmental science.
- **Grade 9-12** students may also enroll in Science Research as an elective.

High school students also have many course options in the field of technology and the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills:

- **Design Drawing and Production:** Students learn about drafting and mechanical drawing.
- **Computer-Aided Design:** Students have the opportunity to work with a 3-D printer to create computer designs.
- **Video Technology I, II and III:** Students can learn about state-of-the-art cameras and editing software in a full video studio.
- **Principles of Engineering through SUNY Farmingdale:** In addition to elective courses that students may enroll in to supplement their learning of engineering practices including planning, designing and constructing, students also have the option to enroll in this college-level course.





# Expanding Vocations

The district utilizes vocational programs through Nassau BOCES for students whose specific interests and skills cannot be met within a school setting. This partnership, which has proven invaluable to students, is cost-effective for residents, promotes college and career readiness, and inspires success for those needing a unique vocational learning environment.

Beginning in their junior year, students at the high school can take advantage of BOCES programs, which now touts vocational programs including STEM-related fields, arts and humanities, health services, natural and agricultural sciences, fashion design, cosmetology and veterinary science. To be considered, students must undergo a rigorous interview process and be reviewed for attendance and classroom participation by an in-house committee.

The vocational courses are designed to be interactive, and students can elect to enroll in a one- or two-year program and earn credits, gain career-ready skills and fulfill their high school graduation requirements. The program is part-time, and students may enroll in a half-day session at one of the BOCES campuses.

## Musically Magnificent

The National Association of Music Merchants and the University of Kansas named Hicksville as a 2016 Best Community for Music Education. The distinction is earned by school districts that exhibit outstanding efforts and commitment toward maintaining music education as part of their schools' core curriculum. The district continues to excel in its music instruction and wide array of programs.

"Receiving this award is validation of how dedicated and committed the Hicksville Public Schools' Board of Education, administration, parents, teachers and students have been to music education in our school district," said Philip Grusenmeyer, district supervisor of fine arts.

To qualify for the designation, the district responded to detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program and community music-making programs. The responses were reviewed by the Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.



## Introducing CLAIRE HOCHHEISER



The district welcomes its new Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, Claire Hochheiser, to its esteemed team

of administrators. Ms. Hochheiser, who has been in the field of education for more than 30 years, the past 16 as an administrator, most recently served as Director of Pupil Personnel for the Hauppauge School District, a position she filled for the past nine years. Prior to her post in Hauppauge, she was the Director of Pupil Personnel for the City of Mount Vernon.

Ms. Hochheiser holds a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education and a master's degree in reading, both from the University of Arizona. She also holds a professional diploma in administration and supervision from LIU Post.

Ms. Hochheiser has been recognized time and again for her proactive involvement in education. She served on the Jericho School District Board of Education for nine years, received school board recognition for her service and dedication, was awarded Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation certification following her completion of the Future Superintendents Academy, and received the Supportive Education Parent Teacher Association award from the Mount Vernon and Jericho school districts.

Stated Dr. Bonuso, "we are delighted to add this dedicated professional to our school family. Her devotion to her craft and commitment to the children she serves are truly to be applauded."

## Welcoming New Teachers

The district's newest educators were warmly welcomed at two separate events — one prior to the start of the school year, and the other two weeks following the first day of school.

The annual new teacher orientation, held in August, served as a forum for the new faculty members to develop camaraderie with their colleagues, get acquainted with the district and its policies, and review effective teaching methods with administrators. At the new teacher reception in September, the names of the new educators were individually announced, and each received a district pin from Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Rosemarie Coletti.

The district welcomes all of the new teachers to its family and encourages them to continue excelling in their craft and going above and beyond to help students realize their dreams.



THE HICKSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Administration Building  
200 Division Avenue  
Hicksville, NY 11801

**Board of Education:**

**Phil Heckler, President**

**Brenda Judson, Vice President**

**Michael Beneventano, Secretary**

*Trustees:*

**Steven Culhane**

**Kevin J. Carroll**

**Carla Hoene**

**Lynda Parmely**

**Carl Bonuso, Ed.D.**

*Superintendent of Schools*

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HICKSVILLE  
NEW YORK  
PERMIT NO. 126

\*\*\*\*ECRWSS\*\*\*\*

**Postal Customer**

**Hicksville, New York 11801**

[www.hicksvillepublicschools.org](http://www.hicksvillepublicschools.org)

# A Focus on Our Facilities

## *Upgrading for Safety and Success*

One of the priorities of the Board of Education is to see that necessary capital work and upgrades are completed throughout the district. Various projects, including districtwide renovations and replacements, are being completed, while many others were recently approved by the State Education Department and will begin soon.

"Capital upgrades are important for the health and safety of students and staff, to maintain a sound learning environment, and to protect the taxpayer's investment in our schools and community," said Assistant Superintendent for Business Marcy Tannenbaum.

Sometimes, a district considers going out to bond for much-needed work that is typically too costly to include in an operating budget. The district last went out to bond in 2002, and since then the curricular needs of students have changed considerably. The district is looking at upgrades to infrastructure such as LED lighting replacement, and window, door and roof replacements. Additional work that would complement capital



upgrades include the high school auditorium and cafeteria, elementary libraries, and the repurposing of classrooms. Approximately 28 percent of the total bond would be reimbursed by the state.

A bond committee, featuring a cross sample of district employees, parents and teachers, will evaluate projects based on health and safety and curriculum and technology initiatives that will meet the needs of students well into the 21st century. The committee will meet monthly and based on the finalized slate of projects, form subcommittees for the purpose of researching specific projects. A committee is crucial because its members are representatives of the district and the community. Each member provides a different perspective and helps to disseminate information into the community, such as why the bond work is important or how the projects were selected. It is important for the community to be informed and to be a part of the process.



## CURRENT CAPITAL PROJECT WORK:

**East Street** – Repair of terra cotta exterior walls and columns

**Fork Lane** – Intermediate wing roof and skylight replacement

**Lee Avenue** – Second floor roof replacement; asphalt repair at kindergarten playground

**Middle School** – Exterior cornice Yankee gutter replacement

**Dutch Lane** – Gym wall padding replacement

**Old Country Road** – Asphalt replacement at rear exterior driveway

**Woodland** – Ceiling replacement - gymnasium and music room; skylight replacement

**Fork Lane and Dutch Lane** – Steam trap replacement

**Districtwide** – Paint, refinish wood floors, repair and paint lockers

## UPCOMING CAPITAL PROJECTS (APPROVED BY SED)

**Burns Avenue, Dutch Lane, Old Country Road, Willet** – Phase II Gas Conversion Project

**Burns Avenue** - Roof replacement in intermediate wing

**Fork Lane, Dutch Lane** – Exterior door replacement

**East Street** – Univent air handling equipment replacement

**District Wide** – Interior door replacement

## SECURITY PROJECTS:

**Districtwide** – upgrades including interior silent alarm system, identification badge readers and additional interior and exterior surveillance cameras

## PROJECTS AWAITING SED APPROVAL:

**Burns Avenue** – Ceiling and LED lighting upgrades

**East Street** – Masonry repairs

**Middle School** – Sidewalk replacement

**High School** – Roof replacement at boys' gym; third floor tile replacement; boys' and girls' locker room renovations; bleacher and pressbox replacement; softball and baseball infield turf

**Districtwide** – Door replacements; ceiling and LED lighting replacement