

Check Out the Club Scene

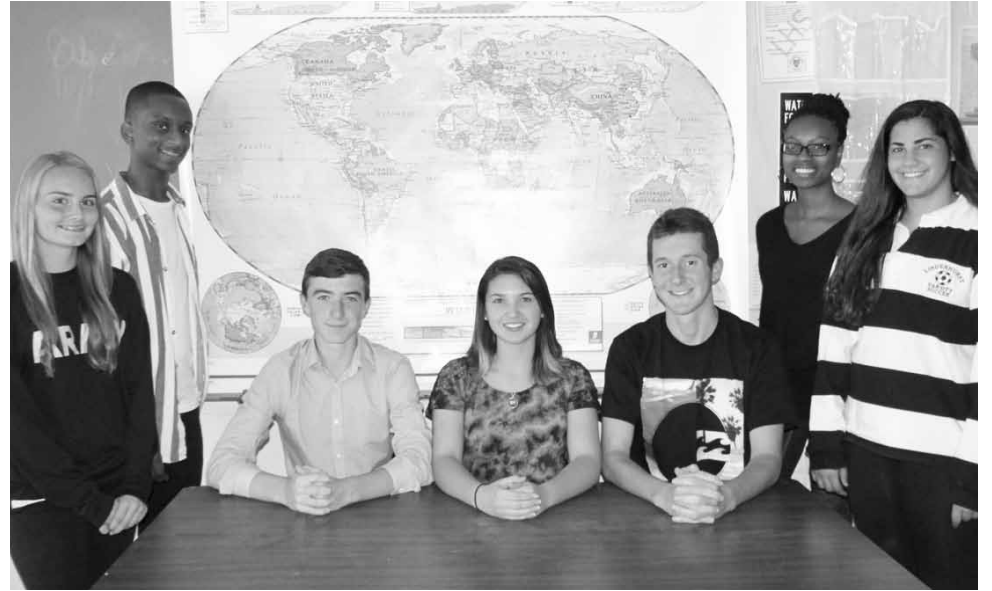
MODEL STUDENTS

Lindenhurst High School students at every grade level now have the opportunity to join Model UN. The club allows students who are interested in international relations and diplomacy to partake in mock simulations regarding global issues.

Each member of this student-driven club is assigned a country to research, for which they will become a “UN Ambassador.” The student then prepares for the simulations by researching

and understanding the economic, political, social and geographic importance of the country and its role in international affairs.

“Through this club, students will not only gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the operations and procedures of the United Nations, but will also hone their skills in debate and negotiation,” said club advisor Christie Larson. “Our goal as a club is to eventually enter competitions with other schools.”



EN GARDE!

Two years ago, Lindenhurst High School student Nicole Rinaldi was introduced to fencing. Since then, she has participated and placed in competitions. This year, Nicole shared her love of the sport with teacher and athletic coach Paul Digiulio, and the Lindenhurst

Fencing Club was established.

During a two-day visit to the school, Anthony Mattera of the Suffolk Fencing Academy introduced the rules and components of the sport to physical education students. Those students had the opportunity to put on the

mask and gloves and wield a saber to determine whether they would be interested in joining the club.

A large number of students expressed interest. The club plans to meet two times a week, beginning in mid-November.

Students get to play with their toys in school! Well, not exactly. The middle school recently began the FIRST Lego League Club, where students work with the beloved childhood toy to explore the properties of robotics and engineering. The club aims to further support and enhance student interest in the areas of science, math and technology.

Students will take part in a school competition in which they will need to work together to complete a common challenge. This year’s “Trash Trek” challenge requires students to research and think on the topic, identify a problem with the way people make or handle trash,

and, as a team, design an innovative solution. Students must then present it to judges following set criteria.

The Lego League team is then allowed to participate in the Robot Game, where students will use Legos to build an autonomous robot to perform tasks on the competition table.

“This club challenges our students to work collaboratively and take a look at problems that impact us and need to be overcome,” said Principal Frank Naccarato, who serves as the club’s advisor. “It gives our students a chance to use engineering skills to create new ways of dealing with those problems.”

SOLVING PROBLEMS WITH PLAYTIME



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Lindy Spotlight is the school district’s community newsletter, containing pertinent information on the activities and issues of the district, published six times annually, and mailed free of charge to all district residents. The district reserves the right to publish information pertaining to students regarding school activities, academic honors, sports programs, scholarships, etc.

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A Strong Start Supports Students' Success

Curricular Changes and New Initiatives Enhance Student Experience

With the start of the 2015-16 school year came the onset of a myriad of changes in the district at every level. You will notice that even this edition of the Lindy Spotlight has changed. In an effort to keep you better informed, the district newsletter has been streamlined to four pages and will contain more substantial and informative articles regarding important topics throughout the district.

This does not mean that you will miss out on the stories regarding student and staff achievements, or school events and charitable drives. Those articles will remain, as they always have, on the district website at www.lindenhurstschools.org, the Facebook page (Lindenhurst Public Schools), in local media such as the Patch and the South Bay Neighbor News, and, in some cases, in regional media outlets such as Newsday and News 12. Additionally, community members can visit the district website to sign up for the My Lindy E-Newsletter, which will now be sent monthly rather than quarterly.

This district prides itself on being the home of excellent schools, and our amazing students and staff play a tremendous role in that. However, a good majority of community members don't know about the other features and programs that make this district excellent. This new format is the first step in overcoming that challenge. But it is merely one of the many new initiatives introduced by the district and highlighted in this edition of the Lindy Spotlight.

Throughout the district, students are participating in new curricula, classes and extracurricular activities. Some of these changes were prompted by student interest and the administration's desire to provide the students of Lindenhurst with an excellent education. Other changes were prompted by mandated legislation.

One such example of this is the change that occurred in Commissioner's Regulation Part 154, which establishes the legal requirements for the education of English language learners. Those changes, which went into full effect in September, require



Lindenhurst High School students enrolled in the Virtual Enterprise International course have created their own virtual business and will experience all of the challenges faced by an actual startup company.

the district to provide additional support for ELL students.

As such, the district now offers co-taught Integrated English as a New Language classes districtwide. Students at the secondary level have ENL push-in teachers, which creates a co-teaching experience.

Curricular changes in English language arts at the elementary level and mathematics at the secondary level (more on page 3) additionally support English language learners by providing them with materials and tutorials in their native language, coupled with the English materials used in their classes. Ultimately, the students will benefit from teachers co-planning and co-teaching, as the teachers will be able to provide rigorous instruction that has been scaffolded to address the students' proficiency levels.

"I am excited to see the teachers embrace this new approach to ELL instruction," said Shelita Watkis, coordinator of foreign language and ENL. "We are all committed to seeing our English language learners succeed academically."

Another change is the implementation of a science research program at the middle school, a course designed to provide eighth-grade students with an introduction to science research. Students will be given an overview of research techniques and methodologies in a variety of scientific fields, along with the opportunity to work on and design inquiry-based labs. Participants are required to present their research at the Middle School Science Fair.

"Careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are at the forefront of industry," said Coordinator of Science Chrystie Young. "The science research program gives students and

teachers the opportunity to work together to gain better insight into the application of academic science content in the future needs of society. It is not about what the students know, but rather what they can do with what they know."

At the high school, new SAT English and math courses are being offered. These courses aim to better prepare students for the new state requirements while making a concerted effort to improve student scores. Students will also have the option of taking Advanced Placement Statistics as an alternative to Calculus.

The Career and Technology Education department now offers Virtual Enterprise International, a course that provides students with the opportunity to create their own virtual business and experience all of the challenges faced by an actual startup company. Led by teachers Nicholas Lombardo and Joanne Williams, the two classes generated ideas for their businesses and created company names and business models, including a board consisting of a CEO, CFO and CAO, as well as a management team tasked with running each of the companies' vital departments. In an effort to give back, Chris Kane, a Lindenhurst graduate and president of Citywide 3 Office Furniture Installations, donated and installed cubicles and office furniture to enhance the students' learning experience and provide them with a realistic working environment.

Staff members throughout the district have been preparing for these changes by taking part in professional development workshops led by teachers, authors and field experts nationwide. The training promotes the success of the district's new initiatives, and more importantly, the success of its students.



Teachers throughout the district have been preparing for certain curricular changes through a variety of professional development workshops.

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Cooking Up Possibilities

A program benefiting the Applied Behavior Analysis and Life Skills classes at the middle school, as well as the Life Skills class at the high school, was implemented this year to incorporate functional learning experiences for those students involved.

At the middle school, the Life Skills curriculum has been enhanced to include the program ABALE, an acronym for "Achieving Academics Based on Living and Learning Experiences." The multidisciplinary program was designed to help students start to develop the skills essential for daily living. These skills are then implemented at the high school level, where Life Skills students take part in a job placement program that allows for the development of vocational skills, as well as functional life skills needed for independent living.

At both levels, students are provided with authentic learning experiences in actual living facilities and working environments. At the middle school level, students in the ABA and Life Skills classes successfully run the Bulldog Corner Store located on the school's second floor. Students also have access to the ABALE Center, which includes the Bulldog Kitchen, a washer and dryer, and an additional workspace. The center was built at no cost to the school district. Developer Jim Nazzaro of JJ Nazzaro and Associates donated the kitchen cabinets, granite countertops and all of the appliances.

"The students are fully engaged and excited about this comprehensive program and have already begun to access the Bulldog Kitchen and Corner Store," said teacher Laurie Ott. "This program offers our students a tactile, visual and kinesthetic approach to learning."

Through the use of approximately \$27,500 in budget aid provided by Sen. Phil Boyle, the



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high school Life Skills class also has access to a functional kitchen this year, where they are able to develop the skills needed for success in their school-appointed job placements, in addition to daily living skills such as washing and drying clothing and preparing meals, which are necessary for independent living. Local Lindenhurst vendor Johnny Mica supplied the countertops and cabinets, while the appliances came from Home Depot. The district's buildings and grounds department was responsible for the majority of

the labor and construction of both kitchens.

"The Life Skills program and the use of these kitchens will help provide our students with functional life skills that they will be able to build upon with each year of their participation in the program," said Suzanne Sugarman, assistant to the superintendent for special education and pupil personnel services. "The abilities and experiences they'll acquire will yield vital independent living skills that will result in greater postsecondary options."

TECHNOLOGY Takeover

Modern Technology Enhances the Past

This year, Lindenhurst Middle School social studies classes have been participating in a Chromebook initiative in lieu of using a traditional textbook. Students will use the laptops to organize their work and writing as well as conduct Internet-based research activities.

It was determined in a department meeting that rather than purchase updated textbooks, the students would benefit most from the Chromebook technology.

"The history in the textbooks has not changed and in many cases represents an opinion," said Social Studies Coordinator Richard Finder. "We want our students to

discover history by investigating hundreds of thousands of documents, photographs, political cartoons and other information pertinent to the topics that they are studying. It's one thing to read a passage from the Monroe Doctrine in a text; it's another thing to read the actual document in its entirety."

Seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms received 30 Google Chromebooks, while sixth-grade teachers were given two sets of 30 for each floor. The social studies department hopes to expand the program to the senior high school in the next few years.



GO-ing Ahead with WONDER-ful Curricular Changes

In September, all district students in grades 3-6 were welcomed back to school and introduced to their new teachers. Shortly thereafter, those teachers introduced students to the McGraw-Hill literacy programs Wonders and Wonder Works.

After they were piloted by Allegheny Avenue Elementary School last year, it was decided that the integrated, Common Core-aligned reading and writing programs were successful with building stronger foundational skills for district students.

Through the programs, weekly concepts are introduced to students. Mini-lessons and the close reading of texts enable

students to establish strategies and skills while exploring literacy concepts such as comprehension, genre, vocabulary and grammar, as well as writing traits. Leveled texts covering a myriad of subject areas allow for students of varying reading abilities to participate in classroom discussion. Additionally, the programs offer a convenient online component that gives parents the ability to support their children's learning at home, as they will now have access to the text and lesson materials in a multitude of languages.

The district is also excited to announce that secondary students will be using a new



math program this year called GO Math. The program offers an engaging, interactive approach to incorporating the New York State Common Core Learning Standards. GO Math emphasizes understanding, computational fluency and real-life applications.

Every lesson begins with an "essential question" that sets the stage for the lesson topic, as well as real-world problems that are instructionally sound and relevant to students. Strategies and conceptual understanding are highlighted through visual representations, mathematical models and student exploration. Depth of understanding is reinforced through the use of "Math Talk" and "Write Math" questions provided within the lessons to support verbal and written communication around important mathematical topics. Those elements of the program require students to explain their thinking, thus generating a greater level of understanding.

Similar to the Wonders program, there is an online component to GO Math that students and parents can access from any laptop, tablet or smartphone. Teachers can assign differentiated online assignments or tutorial videos to students on an individual basis to best meet their needs.

Students can access those assignments or videos anywhere and in any language. Parents who are unfamiliar with the Common Core curriculum, and those whose native

language is not English, are able to watch tutorials, read explanations and support their children in ways they previously would be unable to do.

Both curricular initiatives are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and provide students with an opportunity to gain a more profound level of understanding. In order for teachers to present the information most effectively, they have attended, and will continue to attend, professional development workshops.

It is important to note that the math and English faculty are not alone in honing their craft through professional development workshops. Districtwide, teachers in all subject areas are attending such workshops and learning to incorporate highly effective questioning into their daily classes.

"Questioning is an art and an acquired skill," said Vincent Caravana, assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction and instructional personnel. "While it may appear effortless, highly effective questioning involves all students and elicits critical thinking among each other. It is important for teachers to hone this skill, as it is the foundation for all successful discussion. With programs like Wonders and GO Math, teachers have successful questioning in their instructional 'bag of tricks' to maximize student comprehension in literacy and mathematics."

A Gateway to Student Grades

Students in grades 6 - 12 are now able to access their grades, attendance records, class schedules and transcripts (seniors only) through the student portal. Additional information can be found on the district website's homepage at www.lindenhurstschools.org, in the Parents/Student section.

In addition, Teacher Connect, a function of eSchool that allows teachers to communicate through

messaging with students and parents via the portal, was opened in September. Administration opened the students' portal to establish a sense of student responsibility by making them accountable for their educational records. Likewise, it attempts to prevent students from logging into the Parent Portal so that open lines of communication can be established between parents and teachers using Teacher Connect, without intervention.