

Educational Horizons

APRIL 2013

PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
pobschools.org

Preserving Academic Excellence and Fiscal Prudence at the Forefront of Decision Making

In the wake of the recently imposed tax levy cap and with minimal state aid increases to help offset rising costs, Long Island districts are facing the most challenging budgeting concerns yet. Among the highest increases for 2013-14 are pension contributions, projected to rise by over 35 percent.

Thankfully, due to a spirit of cooperation within the Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District, significant measures have been taken to keep tax increases at a minimum while preserving the uniquely distinguishing features of our excellent educational programs and services. Our Board of Education and administration have been working diligently over the past months to streamline the budget that will be voted on by the community on May 21. Significant salary compromises made by the Plainview Congress of Teachers (PCT), Clericals (CUPCT), and Administrators, Directors and Supervisors Association (ASA) will allow the District to propose a budget that will keep us focused on academic excellence.

In early April, the Plainview-Old Bethpage PTA Council, the PCT, Syosset Council of PTAs and the Syosset Teachers Association hosted a legislative breakfast to discuss key issues pertinent to this year's budget with elected officials. The topics included high stakes testing

and the effect it has on children, the 2 percent tax levy cap and the large cuts in state aid. Attendees were given the opportunity to meet with Assemblyman Chuck Lavine, Congressman Steve Israel, Nassau County Legislator Judy Jacobs and State Senator Carl Marcellino, among others.

In other efforts to keep taxpayer costs down, Plainview-Old Bethpage representatives joined other districts in Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties in lobbying state officials in Albany to increase sorely needed state aid. Several districts collaborated in a letter writing campaign. Thanks to the diligent efforts of our Board of Education, Administration, PCT, and PTA, High Tax Aid was restored.

Maintaining a long-term view for fiscal responsibility and working together with all bargaining units is ultimately what will allow our District to provide a balanced budget proposal. Please see the calendar on page two of this newsletter, and plan to attend as many budget meetings as you are able. Your input is essential as we move forward together. Only by continuing to work together as a District and community can we ensure the greatest educational opportunities for our students.

POBJFKHS Wins 25th Annual Moot Court Tournament



(L-R) Roy Klein, Attorney Coach; Nancy Rogers, Advisor; Joanna Eagle, Joshua Young, Ben Chasan, the winning team; Jason Andrews, Advisor

Truman Capote once said of his childhood friendship with fellow author Harper Lee, "We went to the trials instead of going to the movies." Capote knew then what years later millions of *Judge Judy* and *The People's Court* fans would find out: the courtroom can be a place of high drama.

The thrill and theatrics of court are what makes Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School's Moot Court Tournament such a memorable and educational experience for students. Now in its 25th year, the tournament was held throughout the day on March 20. At the competition, a POBJFKHS team, comprising Joanna Eagle, Joshua Young and Ben Chasan, triumphed over student-lawyers from 11 Long Island schools. Also participating from POBJFKHS were Corey Still, Danielle Apfel and Noah Frenkel.

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Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District
Administrative Offices • Washington Avenue • Plainview, NY 11803
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Superintendent's Message



In early March, while I participated in Lobby Day in Albany to urge our legislators to return the High Tax Aid that had been removed from the Governor's proposed budget, I received a constant flow of District communications informing me of accolades that were bestowed on our students from all areas

of our program. My twitter feed was lit up as I "kvelled" with pride at the many ways students were taking advantage of the opportunities you have provided them through your support of our schools. I was never more proud to present my case to the legislators. Our students are worth fighting for!

Fortunately, through the letter-writing efforts of the PTA and the Board of Education as well as our lobbying efforts, our legislators were able to restore High Tax Aid. Our gratitude is also extended to Assemblyman Chuck Lavine for giving us an additional \$50,000 in aid. Additionally, we have to thank the Town of Oyster Bay for its very generous donation of a turf field at the high school. Construction is expected to take place during the summer, and we are hopeful to begin the new school year ready for fall football on our new athletic field. This field will be enjoyed by our students as well as the entire community.

This District and community have historically worked diligently to preserve the exceptional qualities that distinguish Plainview-Old Bethpage schools. This year, like all districts across Long Island, Plainview-Old Bethpage faces dramatic

increases in many areas, including pension and health care costs. The state's Annual Professional Performance Review mandates will be also reflected in increases to the 2013-14 tax levy.

In the face of these challenges, the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District has undertaken major initiatives to offset increases while ensuring that our students continue to benefit from the excellent programs and services that have earned them recognition and praise. The superintendent, administrators (ASA), Plainview Congress of Teachers (PCT) and Clericals (CUPCT), have all agreed to a wage freeze for the 2013-14 school year. This is indeed a sacrifice embedded in a "Students First" belief, for which the Board of Education is extremely grateful.

I have no doubt that Plainview-Old Bethpage students are being well prepared for college and career upon graduation. I know I speak for many others in expressing my gratitude to a dedicated staff who have worked diligently to protect our high-quality student programs while staying within the established economic parameters. I urge each of you to do your part to stay informed about the budget. The value of your participation cannot be underestimated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lorna R. Lewis

Dr. Lorna R. Lewis

Budget Calendar

Tuesday, May 7
Budget Hearing/Public Hearing

Wednesday, May 8
Meet the Candidates Night
7 p.m. POBMS

Tuesday, May 14
Voter Registration
**Absentee Ballot Applications due

Tuesday, May 21
Budget Vote and Election of School Board Members
6 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Jamaica Avenue School, Old Bethpage Elementary School and POBMS

POBJFKHS Announces Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Adrian Kim and Chelsea Giller are the POBJFKHS Class of 2013 valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively. Adrian is co-president of the National Honor Society and Art Club, and recipient of the prestigious Long Island Scholar-Artist award. Chelsea holds leadership positions in the National Honor, French, Science and Art Societies, and plays varsity tennis.



(L-R) James Murray, Principal; Sara Schaffer, Guidance Counselor; Chelsea Giller, Salutatorian; Adrian Kim, Valedictorian; Domenick DeDomenico, Guidance Counselor; Laurie Lynn, Director of Guidance

What's Happening in Our Schools

Young Dickinsons and Hemingways at the K Center

Each day, students at the **Kindergarten Center** improve their writing skills as they learn about the writing process. This process involves learning about the different styles of writing through literature, generating ideas for writing as a group, selecting an idea to write about, creating a draft using a graphic organizer, revising and editing, and publishing and reading their stories together. Throughout the year, kindergartners have become more confident and creative writers. In a recent writing unit, students were experts for their chosen topics as they wrote books such as *How to Draw a Cheetah*, *How to Ice Skate*, *How to Be a Good Friend* and *How to Play Ice Hockey*. Students in Ms. Truelove's class were proud to share their "published" books with their classmates and families.



Several Guest Speakers Highlight OB PARP Celebration

One of the most fundamental and vital responsibilities of educators is to cultivate children's proficiency in and appreciation for reading. The Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) program represents a wonderful way to accomplish this. Like many schools nationwide, **Old Bethpage Elementary School** holds its own version of a PARP celebration; the theme this year was DREAM BIG: READ! To kick off the celebration, radio station Z100 DJs Scotty B. and Greg T. visited the school and read aloud *Green Eggs and Ham* to fourth grade students, and several other guest speakers stopped by to read a Dr. Seuss book to children. The week ended with a visit from children's writer Shana Corey, author of such books as *Mermaid Queen*, *Players in Pigtails* and many others. One of the hallmarks of PARP is that it asks parents to read at home with their children for 15 minutes per day. To encourage this practice, teachers gave the students a PARP calendar to keep track of their progress.



'The Wizard of Oz' a Hit at Parkway Elementary

The Wizard of Oz is a classic that can truly be said to have stood the test of time. Thanks to the support of the PTA, students at **Parkway Elementary School** performed their own version in front of their classmates and families. The show was a collaborative effort among all students in grades one through four, who rehearsed for weeks in preparation for the big performance. "The children did a phenomenal job, and I'm so extremely proud of their efforts," said Principal Ronelle Hershkowitz. "Who knows? We may even have some budding actors and actresses in our midst."

Pasadena Children Skype With Students from Africa

As third grade students at **Pasadena Elementary School** continued learning about Africa in their social studies course, they received a special surprise from a few thousand miles away. Children in Michelle Macedonio's and Ruth Wisoky's classes had the opportunity to enjoy a video chat with students from a school in Ghana, Africa, using Skype. The Skype conversation was the result of a fortunate coincidence. Ben and Leo Goldberg, twins in Ms. Macedonio's and Ms. Wisoky's classes, have an adult cousin, Elana Cohen-Khani, who works for Innovations for Poverty Action. The non-profit organization, with the assistance of Yale University and the University of Ghana, organized the Skype session for our students. They learned about Ghanaian culture, food, transportation and weather. As a gesture of friendship, Pasadena students played traditional African drums and sang "Kpanlogo," the traditional Ghanaian song commemorating the country's independence in 1957.





Prolific Children’s Writer Visits Stratford Road

Educators at **Stratford Road Elementary School** organized a special guest performance to kick off the school’s Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) celebration, which began in early March. Renowned children’s author James Howe visited the library to speak with our fortunate students. Mr. Howe, known for works including *Mr. Tinker in Oz* and the popular *Bunnicula* series, told students about the process of making a book, from brainstorming and journaling to the finished product. He also shared with the students the backgrounds of many of their favorite books. After the presentation, Mr. Howe was kind enough to eat lunch with some of the third and fourth grade students and listen as they shared their own writing ideas.

It was a very rewarding day for both children and teachers. Thank you very much to James Howe for visiting our school.

MMS’ Math Olympians Place at Countywide Tournament

While the mere mention of math makes many people recoil in fear, there are several students at **Mattlin Middle School** who have no such qualms with the challenging subject. In fact, they’re math award winners. Talia Blum, Gabrielle Meyers, Mel Oganessian, Alex Stepanyk, and Zachariah Samuel are members of Math Olympiad Club at MMS; collectively they took third place in the highly competitive seventh and eighth grade Math Olympiad Tournament. A third place finish in a competition that featured math students from all over Nassau County is a significant team achievement, but there were personal accolades as well.

Gabrielle, Mel and Zachariah tied for first place in a competition that joined them with students from different schools; eighth grader Talia placed fourth in the individual contest. The strong showing at the tournament is testament to the work of the students and their advisors, Louise Cataldo and Sherri Winick. Congratulations to the MMS Math Olympiad Club.



Foreign Cultures Celebrated at POBMS

With the ever-shifting demographics in the U.S., it is increasingly important for teachers to immerse students in the histories and customs of foreign cultures. **Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School’s** annual World Culture Fair is aimed at doing just that. Run by the school’s Department of World Languages in conjunction with New York State’s Foreign Language Week, this year’s World Culture Fair was held during a school day in early March. The fair consisted of several student-run displays showcasing a variety of cultures. Students were given the freedom to display the unique cultures they chose in whichever ways they wished, and they took full advantage. Many wore traditional garb, prepared national dishes or displayed traditional totems, among other presentations. A respectful and tolerant culture should be the goal of every school, and that can be achieved only through knowledge and

understanding. The World Culture Fair is one way POBMS is helping to create an ideal school atmosphere.

POBots Win Award for Community Service at Robotics Competition

At the regional New York City FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition, our team made our school proud. In addition to reaching the semifinals of the contest, the POBots took home the prestigious Judges’ Award for their outstanding community service. The team mission is to “spread awareness and interest about engineering, science, and technology.” Advisors encourage students to work with mentors in engineering fields, and in turn, to mentor younger students in the District; a vital aspect of membership is the development of leadership qualities. Team members also focus on initiatives to benefit others. Their efforts have included raising \$1,400 for superstorm Sandy victims, extensive community volunteering, and mentoring five FIRST Lego League teams. The team’s quest to reach the finals of the FIRST Competition this year was derailed when their partner team had a robot malfunction. However, a semifinal berth is no small accomplishment; there were over sixty teams participating in the contest. Congratulations to each of the team members on reaching the semifinal round, an on their well-deserved trophy. The POBots will next head to the School-Business Partnerships Long Island (SBPLI) Hofstra Regional, where they will contend for numerous awards. We wish them great success in this and all of their future endeavors.



Students' Hard Work Adds Up at the LI Math Fair

Nineteen students in grades 9-11 competed in the Al Kalfus Long Island Math Fair in March, an event attended by more than 1,200 of Nassau County's elite student mathematicians. Eight of the POBJFKHS students were selected as finalists in the championship round at Hofstra University on April 26. Congratulations to all of our students who participated in the fair, and to finalists Nicolette Almer, Mustafa Ansari, Reva Butensky, Arielle Gabalski, Daniel Kwon, Joon Tae Lee, Anna Vaynub and Alma Wang. A special thank you to Kimberly Ferina, chairperson of mathematics; Marylou O'Donnell, research coordinator; and Joyce Barry, director of science, research and technology, for helping the students prepare for this event.

(L-R) Daniel Kwon, Arielle Gabalski, Mustafa Ansari, Nicolette Almer, Reva Butensky, Tae Joon Lee and Alma Wang. Not Pictured: Anna Vaynub



Fourth Graders Send Joy Overseas

Students from schools all over the Plainview- Old Bethpage School District recently "adopted" a soldier and his unit, which is currently stationed in Afghanistan.



Sergeant Michael Cavezza is the nephew of Plainview- Old Bethpage Director of Guidance Laurie Lynn. To bring joy to him and his unit, the students raised money, wrote letters, decorated banners and collected toiletries to package and send overseas. Participating classes included Andrew Paskal's fourth grade class and Myra Brand's third grade class at Stratford Road Elementary School, and several Middle School Advisory Program (MAP) classes at POBMS and MMS. In addition, students at POBMS held a volleyball game fundraiser, raising nearly \$2000 – half of which was used to purchase various goods for Sergeant Cavezza's unit.

POBJFKHS Wins 25th Annual Moot Court Tournament

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Before the mock trials began, each school was provided a fact pattern and given 15 minutes to prepare for its case. Members of the moot court served as lawyers, witnesses and researchers for cases that included libel, fraud and personal injury lawsuits. Some of the students took the stand for opening/closing statements, cross-examinations and other customary courtroom scenarios. The cases were presented to a panel of over 25 Long Island judges, lawyers and law student alumni.

After a quarter century of success, the Plainview-Old Bethpage Moot Court Tournament has become an institution, and it is truly an honor to have so many local schools participate. Congratulations to all of our winners and to each of the POBJFKHS students who participated.

POBJFKHS Students Shine at DECA Competition

At the New York State DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) Competition in early March, the tireless commitment of students and educators at Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School was justly rewarded. In all, 146 DECA students competed at the statewide competition; 88 moved on to the International DECA conference in Anaheim, California this April.

Over 20 students were awarded first place for their presentations in several events, including creative marketing, entrepreneurship promotion, finance operations research and sports and entertainment. Additionally, Jacob Cohen and Benjamin Weiss came in first in New York for their project in H&R Dollars and Sense National Challenge. Senior Jamie Bernstein was recognized for her community involvement and leadership by being the only participant to win a DECA scholarship, and the POB school store, The Hawk's Nest, received prestigious Gold Star Status thanks to the dedication of students Elijah Sauer, Spencer Pokorny and Erica Talkofsky. The Hawk's Nest was the only school store in New York to earn this honor.



Plainview-Old Bethpage as a whole was distinguished as well. Thanks in part to community outreach events, including the DECA Fights Back Fashion Show and Financial Literacy Day, the POBJFKHS DECA chapter earned recognition by the DECA parent organization in its Thrive campaign, which recognizes high achieving DECA chapters throughout the world. Our DECA chapter received three allocations to participate in the Thrive Academy at the 2013 international competition.

Music News

MMS Performs at Day of Horn Event

Three musicians from **Mattlin Middle School** – Derek Futterman, Julia Kachianos and Danielle Mintz – recently performed at the largest French horn event in the world, according to *Guinness Book of World Records*. In January, Suffolk County Music Educators' Association (SCMEA) held its eighth annual *Day of Horn* concert at Commack Middle School in Dix Hills. Derek, Julia and Danielle joined students and teachers from all over Suffolk County to celebrate the influential brass instrument. The festivities included special clinics, a French horn concert and a guest performance by Michael Slatkin, associate principal of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. The three Mattlin students were joined by their band teacher, Karen Bernstein. This event earned recognition as a record holder among horn concerts in 2011, when the sound of 264 French horns filled the air. To date, that record has not been broken.



It was a privilege for our students to have the opportunity to perform at such an esteemed event. Derek, Julia and Danielle's participation is just one more demonstration of the hard work and talent of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Music Department.

POBJFKHS Orchestra Hosts 17th Annual Exchange Concert



For one night this past winter, cross-county rivalries between string players at POBJFKHS and its long-time competitor Elwood John H. Glenn High School were put on hold thanks to a mutual commitment to music. Under the tutelage of director Glenn Rubin, the POBJFKHS string orchestra hosted the 17th annual Exchange Concert with assistance from John Glenn students and their director Karen Gellert. A total of 129 student musicians performed a variety of exalted masterworks, closing with a fine version of Richard Meyer's "Vanishing Point."

The Exchange Concert offers a wonderful venue to promote a spirit of collaboration between different school orchestras. It is a privilege for our District to have our high school take a leadership role in this important undertaking.

ART NEWS

POBJFKHS Artists Display Their Works at Prominent Art Show

The young artists in our District continue to impress. Several students from POBJFKHS had their artwork displayed in the prestigious High Arts Showcase at the Art-trium in Melville, New York. The showcase was made up entirely of junior and senior students and featured artwork from all mediums. The artists whose works were shown at the exhibition were Dori Gronich, Adrian Kim, Erica Koplitz, Justin Levy, Madeleine Mottel, Jenna Ruiz, Allen Saltzman, Jena Stark and Ilana Strauss. Congratulations to the artists, their families and their teachers for this impressive accomplishment.

Jena Stark



Erica Koplitz



Allen Saltzman



Adrian Kim

