

# The Bulletin Board

News from the Hicksville UFSD

## PRESCHOOL: The First Step

This past fall, Hicksville Public Schools partnered with SCOPE to open a half-day morning preschool program to residents. The curriculum is aligned to the New York State Learning Standards for the Common Core, and the students are fully integrated into the elementary school setting, allowing for a smooth transition into kindergarten.

"Inside every student is a passion for learning, and we understand how important it is at a young age to instill in them the importance of education," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carl Bonuso. "This program provides an opportunity for children to learn social and emotional skills, follow instructions and begin the groundwork for learning that will occur in elementary school."

The learning environment is colorful and vibrant, with activity centers, shared reading and literacy activities that focus on writing and math. Instruction is delivered in individual, small and large groups by teachers who are New York State certified. It is also essential for parents to take an active role in their child's early educational years and create a strong home-school connection.

The program is tuition-based, with opportunities for financial assistance for those who qualify. The district is looking forward to expanding the program next year to include a morning and afternoon session at Woodland Elementary School and Burns Avenue Elementary School. For more information, please contact the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at 516-733-2145 or SCOPE at 631-360-0800, ext. 133.

## One-to-One WITH Technology

With the progression of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has come an increasing awareness of technology's dominant role in the classroom. It has changed how teachers teach and students learn. By embracing and integrating technology into their lessons, teachers are preparing their students for a lifetime of success beyond the K-12 years.

For the past three years, students at Hicksville Middle School have been using iPads for daily instruction. As the first group of sixth-graders, who received iPads during the 2012-13 school year, approached their high school years, discussions began about what the district's plan should be regarding technology integration at the secondary level. The Hicksville High School Technology Committee, comprised of teachers and administrators, met several times last year to discuss which device would help students succeed the most during their high school years. The group agreed upon the Acer Chromebook, selected for its touchscreen interface and physical keyboard.

"It is my belief that the touch



interface is essential to the student's user experience," said Director of Technology and Grants, Dan Friedman. "They live and socialize in a world that is connected with touch interface technology."

The newly initiated Chromebook program is projected to grow over the next three school years. They, along with iPads, will be provided to the incoming class of ninth-graders every year, who will keep them through their high school years. Both devices are distributed each September and collected at the end of the school year.

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updates to course content across curricula and departments, 21st Century Skills will no longer be offered as a required eighth-grade course; this will provide students with additional options and elective choices.

### PLANNING FOR AN ADVISORY PROGRAM

To complement the changes to the courses of study, the middle school has been exploring and planning for the implementation of an advisory program. Teachers and administrators have also been working with renowned consultant Dr. Nancy Doda throughout the year. A team of middle school teachers, along with Principal Mara Jorisch, has attended meetings facilitated by Dr. Doda through the middle level collegial network, which is comprised of a consortium of five school districts.

The advisory program, of which final details are being developed, will serve as another way to create and maintain stronger bonds among students, their teachers and their school. By exploring character-related themes through a variety of activities in smaller classroom settings, the program will allow teachers to connect with their advisees and provide students with opportunities to navigate their journey through the middle school with guidance and support.

# FRAMEWORK for the *Future*

Following nearly one year of planning, the middle school is preparing to implement changes to its frameworks, which is a document that outlines course offerings as well as class configurations for each grade level. The new document, "Hicksville Middle School Frameworks for the Future," provides more opportunities for acceleration, in addition to new choices for courses and electives.

### MODIFICATIONS TO COURSE OFFERINGS FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL

Minor changes are coming to sixth-grade course offerings. Most notably, sixth-grade students who are required

to take AIS ELA will be able to substitute AIS ELA for Communication Arts, which in turn will provide them with the opportunity to take other courses, such as Health, FLEX Foreign Language or Technology.

Seventh-graders will have the opportunity to take new elective courses such as Wearable Electronics, Special Topics in the Humanities, and Science Research and Health. They will also have five options to choose from when selecting a language to learn: Spanish, Italian, French, Mandarin and the newly added American Sign Language.

Eighth-graders will have the opportunity to accelerate in science, as all eighth-grade students

will take the Living Environment Regents course. This additional course will provide students with the opportunity to earn as many as four high school credits while they are still in middle school. Other credited courses include Algebra I, Studio in Art and the eighth-grade language courses. Eighth-grade electives include Robotics, Woodworking, Science Research, Special Topics in Humanities, Wearable Electronics, Studio in Art, and band, orchestra, chorus and piano.

Curriculum updates are also anticipated in the Computer Skills classes offered for each grade level. Due to advances in technology, as well as

# One-to-One WITH Technology

Students and teachers are using the Chromebooks as part of the Google Apps for Education program. Google provides school districts with an enormous set of tools, including unlimited Google Drive storage, Google Docs, Sheets and Slides,

YouTube for Schools and Google Classroom. Google Classroom allows teachers to create an exciting digital workflow in which paper can nearly be eliminated, and enables teachers and students to use media-rich Internet content for daily instruction.



## PAVING the Way | *Offering Students Different Avenues for Success*

As students enter their high school years, it is essential that they be given the knowledge and skills to achieve at their highest potential. To unlock that potential, the district has partnered with Nassau BOCES to offer students the ability to attend the Doshi STEM Institute, the Joseph M. Barry Career and Technical Education Center or the Long Island High School for the Arts.

“It is our mission that every student will acquire the academic, career and personal skills to reach their fullest educational potential and successfully manage their lives as healthy, responsible, competent and productive citizens who respect themselves and others,” said Guidance Chairperson Efthymia Rafaelides.

Allowing students to participate in the BOCES half-day program, as well as at the high school, has enhanced their learning experience. Students enrolled in these programs receive a

hands-on experience taught by certified teachers.

Now in its third year, the district’s involvement with the Doshi STEM program continues to grow and will expand from its current eight Hicksville High School students to 15 for the 2016-17 school year. Students who attend this program have a passion for science or math and are interested in pursuing STEM-related careers. As part of each unit of study, students also meet with scientists, engineers, technicians and industry leaders, exposing them to a variety of STEM careers and workplaces.

Currently, 34 Hicksville High School students are enrolled at Barry Tech, where they are involved in 18 different programs. Students who attend the career and technical education center participate in real-world, hands-on learning experiences. Completion of these programs allows

students to enter the workforce after graduation, continue advanced career studies, or attend a two- or four-year college.

Another option available to students is the Long Island High School for the Arts, where they can take part in world-class training and prepare for a career in the arts.

If a student is interested in applying to any of these programs, they can contact their guidance counselor for further information. In order to participate, students must undergo an internal screening process through the high school, as well as through BOCES.

Mrs. Rafaelides noted that students are performing beautifully in these programs and are provided many opportunities for success. “We are very excited as we prepare all of our students for success past their high school years,” she said.

### UP NEXT. PLANT *A Look at District Facilities*

Throughout the year, each newsletter will be featuring one “p” of the Three P’s — People, Program and Plant — to highlight the district’s initiatives with regard to that particular component. In the upcoming spring newsletter, the “Plant” component will

be addressed with an in-depth look at the district’s facilities.

“Plant” will look at what the district is doing to provide a learning environment that is safe, secure, and responsive to contemporary instructional needs.

THE HICKSVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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Hicksville, NY 11801

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## Inside the ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

At Burns Avenue, characters from a variety of storybooks came to life at the annual Burnies Awards, during which students role-played for chances to win coveted prizes.

Dutch Lane hosted its annual fifth-graders versus staff members volleyball game, offering peers and colleagues the opportunity to cheer for their stars.

In honor of National Children's Dental Health Month, East Street fourth-graders made their own toothpaste following a dentist's lesson about the importance of oral hygiene.

Fork Lane hosted its annual Books Alive event, during which the school's teachers presented scenes from students' favorite books in a play format.

Lee Avenue students and staff raised more than \$430 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital on National Bubble Gum Day.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carl Bonuso visited the school to read "Bubble-Gum Artist" to students.

Kindergartners at Old Country Road celebrated their 100th day of school with a variety of educational and Common Core-aligned activities related to the number 100, including creating a 100th day hat and writing about what they would do if they had \$100.

Woodland students celebrated the Chinese New Year by marching in a parade through the building while displaying festive masks.



*Burns Avenue*



*East Street*



*Lee Avenue*

## Hicksville Public Schools to Host Spring Senior Citizen Luncheon

The district is pleased to host the 24th annual Spring Senior Citizen Luncheon on April 7 at 2 p.m. at Hicksville High School.

The festivities will begin with an opening reception for our guests and include a luncheon with a choice

of three delicious entrees: chicken cordon bleu, stuffed shells or swedish meatballs. Tickets are available for purchase to Hicksville senior citizen residents at \$5 each during the hours of 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., at the Reception Desk in the

Hicksville Administration Building located at 200 Division Ave.

Entertainment during the luncheon will be provided by talented Hicksville High School music and theater students, who will present musical numbers and acting

prepared especially for our guests.

Please join us for a wonderful afternoon of dining and entertainment. For additional information, residents can contact the Office of Community Services at 516-733-2190.