



The Panther Press

FALL 2024

MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Empowering excellence today, developing tomorrow's achievers, forever Miller Place proud."

www.millerplace.k12.ny.us

THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR GETS UNDERWAY AT MILLER PLACE!

Welcome back to another exciting school year! These photos capture the enthusiasm and energy of our students as they returned to the classroom. From first-day smiles to new friendships, the spirit of learning and growth that defines our school community was well represented in early September. As we embark on this new academic journey together, let's carry forward the joy, curiosity, and determination that make our district a place where every student can thrive. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!



A Message from Superintendent Seth Lipshie

Welcome to the 2024-25 school year. This summer we hired over 30 new staff members that includes clericals, nurses, aides, operations, teacher assistants, teachers and administrators. Going into this year, we are undergoing significant change in each of our building's administrative teams. Change is always part of education and brings new opportunities. I ask our staff and community to embrace new these new opportunities.

In August parents, guardians and students were invited into our buildings for a walk-through and orientation. Staff gathered on August 28th and 29th for Superintendent's Conference Day to finalize preparation for our students' return.

On Tuesday, September 3rd, we welcomed over 2,000 students to classrooms including the 2025 Senior Class along with our newest generation of students as the Class of 2038 entered Andrew Muller Primary School.

As we opened, the new school year activities were in high gear. Each school building had their Open Houses as parents and guardians were invited to meet their child's teachers. Our District provides students with a well-rounded experience as students have the option to participate in extracurricular activities. This fall, students in grades 7 through 12 will represent Miller Place in 19 interscholastic athletic teams. Clubs are an opportunity for students to be involved in school and with approximately 40 clubs offered at the secondary level, students are offered the chance to select those activities that interest them. In the late fall and early winter, clubs will start at both Andrew Muller Primary School and Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School.

As students start the new academic year, the Miller Place staff are committed to planning, teaching and supporting student success inside and outside the classroom. It is important for students to let staff members know if they need assistance and encourage parents and guardians to reach out to the staff so they can best understand any issues and devise a plan to reduce any struggles that might prevent their success.

We will continue to build on the Strategic Plan successes, and this fall we will be surveying parents, guardians, staff and students to collect feedback and input to improve on our student success and continue to make Miller Place the best possible District.

As always, I look forward to working with students, parents, guardians and staff.

Empowering excellence today, developing tomorrow's achievers, forever Miller Place proud.

A Message from the Board of Education

The Board of Education is excited to welcome you all back! As we start this school year, we do so with many changes. We've seen the retirement of a cherished administrator and staff who have devoted years to our district, as well as many staff members transitioning into new roles. While these transitions mark the end of one chapter, they also signal the beginning of a fresh, exciting journey for our schools. We look forward to the growth and innovation that these changes will bring, knowing that they offer new opportunities for all of us to move forward together. Carol S. Dweck, an educator and author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, reminds us that, "with a growth mindset, challenges are exciting and offer opportunities for growth and learning."

This fall, we look forward to a vibrant and active school community. The excitement of open houses, Homecoming, the return of clubs, and the start of our fall sports season—to name a few—all give us reasons to come together, support one another, and celebrate the many talents within our district.

Thank you to our parents, students, and staff for your ongoing dedication to making our schools a supportive and positive place for everyone. We look forward to a fantastic year full of learning, growth, and excitement! Together, we are ready to embrace the opportunities ahead and make this a remarkable school year.

We are Miller Place Proud!

Sincerely,

Lisa Reitan, *Board of Education President*

AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

ANDREW MULLER PRIMARY SCHOOL

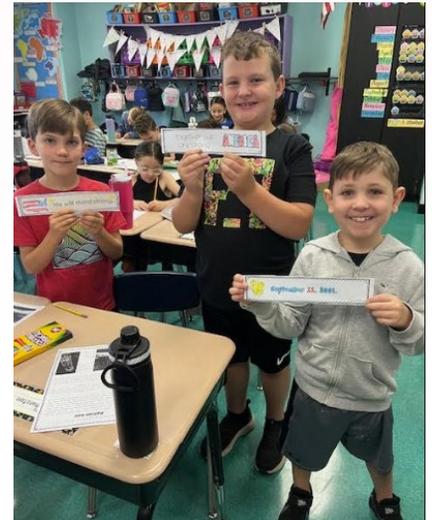
The start of the school year is one of the most exciting weeks on the calendar, and Andrew Muller Primary School kicked off the year with excitement as students returned with smiles and warm greetings. Classrooms filled with activities focused on making new friends, building routines, and settling in. (And the newly installed air conditioning made for a comfortable start!)

Kindergarteners began the year by learning colors through creative activities, including balloon color coding and fun dress-up days highlighting rainbow colors and more. In art, Mrs. Stasi introduced students to *The Dot* by Peter Reynolds for International Dot Day, inspiring them to “make their mark.” Kindergarteners explored pointillism, while Grade 1 and 2 students studied Lea Anderson and Wassily Kandinsky, respectively.



LADDIE A. DECKER SOUND BEACH SCHOOL

In observance of Patriot Day, our third-grade students at Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School engaged in a meaningful project to honor the memory of the heroes of September 11, 2001. Students worked together to create a remembrance chain, a powerful symbol of unity and resilience. They learned about the significant impact of this day on America and the importance of commemorating and honoring those affected. Every student chose and decorated a chain link, which were then connected to form a chain. This chain serves as a reminder of how Americans came together in strength and solidarity on September 11, and it reinforces our collective commitment to never forget.



NORTH COUNTRY ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL



North Country Road Middle School recently kicked off the new school year with an exciting August orientation for our sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. During the event, students explored the school, followed their schedules, and practiced opening their lockers to set themselves up for a successful year ahead. Our building administration, guidance counselors, and student volunteers were on hand to provide support and answer any questions. Here’s to a fantastic start to the school year!

AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

MILLER PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

Two MPHS Seniors are National Merit Semifinalists

We are so proud to announce that two of our students, Lucy Chang (left) and Sean Pepe (right), have been recognized as semifinalists in the prestigious 70th National Merit Scholarship competition. Lucy and Sean are among 16,000 students nationwide to be considered for 6,870 awards, totaling more than \$26 million, to be awarded in the spring. Their achievement reflects both their hard work and academic excellence, and we wish them the best as they continue in the competition!



MPHS Partners with Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame

Miller Place High School is thrilled to announce a new partnership with the Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame to bring an exciting and enriching sports history program to our students. This unique collaboration will provide students with the opportunity to dive deep into the rich history of sports on Long Island and beyond, while also exploring the connections between sports, society, and culture.

The program will feature a variety of engaging components, including guest speakers who are experts in the fields of sports, history, and business, as well as research projects that will challenge students to uncover and present lesser-known stories from local sports history. Students will have the chance to interact with prominent figures from the sports world, gain valuable insights, and even contribute to preserving the legacy of Suffolk County's athletic achievements.



The initiative is the result of a collaborative effort led by Chris Vaccaro, president of the Suffolk Sports Hall of Fame, and Bryan Vaccaro, a social studies teacher at Miller Place High School. Their shared passion for sports and education has driven the creation of this program, which is designed to inspire students not only to appreciate sports history but also to consider future careers in history, education, sports management, and related fields.

NEW ROLES IN THE DISTRICT

The Miller Place School District is excited to see the fresh perspectives the following educational leaders bring to their new roles.

Districtwide



Matthew Nicoletti has been named the district's new curriculum specialist for humanities. With over a decade of experience as an English teacher, coach, and dean of students, Mr. Nicoletti will be an incredible addition to our administrative team. A Miller Place High School graduate, he is known for his dynamic teaching style and leadership.

Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School



Dr. Jean Marie D'Aversa has been named as the new principal of Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School. A proud Miller Place native, Dr. D'Aversa brings a wealth of experience in education and administration. With six years as a building administrator and having served previous roles in the East Islip School District, she looks forward to fostering a positive learning environment for the district's young students.

North Country Road Middle School



Christine Mangiamele, a familiar face in the district since 2005, has been named principal at North Country Road Middle School. Having served as a world language teacher, assistant principal, and most recently as curriculum specialist for humanities, Ms. Mangiamele's deep commitment to the district has prepared her well for this leadership role.

MUSIC AND ARTS NEWS

September 2024 Highlights

We are proud to announce that Lucy Chang, a senior at Miller Place High School, has been named a Long Island Scholar-Artist for the Class of 2025 by the Long Island Arts Alliance (LIAA). This prestigious program recognizes outstanding high school artists across Long Island, with monthly profiles appearing in *Newsday* and on *Newsday.com*.



The LIAA Scholar-Artist Awards celebrate excellence in five disciplines: Visual Arts, Music, Theater, Dance, and Media Arts. Students are nominated by public, private, and parochial schools across the region. Each month, one Scholar-Artist from Nassau County and one from Suffolk County are selected, with additional students receiving Awards of Merit at a year-end recognition event. Congratulations to Lucy for this incredible achievement!



We would also like to congratulate three talented students from Miller Place High School who were selected to participate in the 2024 All-State Conference, which will take place December 5-8, 2024 in Rochester. Pictured below, from left to right is: Stephen Ye (violin, alternate), Lucy Chang (viola, String Orchestra), and Nailah Rahman (double bass, Symphony Orchestra). Well done, and good luck at the conference!

Additionally, Sean Creedon, a junior at Miller Place, and his brother Bernard Creedon (MPHS Class of 2024) attended the Inside:Outside Retreat for Saxophonists in Tennessee this summer. The two had the incredible opportunity to meet and learn from three-time Grammy Award-winning saxophonist Bob Reynolds. We're proud to see our students excelling and making the most of these opportunities!



New and Updated Facilities

This fall, students returned to school with newly renovated facilities, including an updated art room and gymnasium at Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School, a new playground at Andrew Muller Primary School, and an updated Family and Consumer Science classroom at North Country Road Middle School. These new and updated learning spaces provide for our students safe, productive and intuitive places in which to learn, grow and play throughout the school year!



ATHLETICS NEWS

Miller Place High School Seniors Recognized as Top Athletes by *Newsday*

All of us at Miller Place High School would like to congratulate the outstanding achievements of three of our impressive senior athletes, both of whom have been named among *Newsday*'s Top 100 Football Players and Top 50 Girls Field Hockey Players.

Shane Kiernan, senior quarterback, earned a spot on *Newsday*'s Top 100 Football Players list. He had an impressive season, passing for 1,010 yards and scoring 11 touchdowns.

In girls' field hockey, **Sadie Hoffman** and **Gwendolyn Smith**, both seniors, were honored in *Newsday*'s Top 50. Sadie, a SUNY Cortland commit, contributed 6 goals and 8 assists, while Gwendolyn, a four-year varsity starter and Mercy College commit, added 2 goals and 6 assists to her team's efforts.

Miller Place High School is proud of these student athletes for their dedication and success both on and off the field.



Shane Kiernan



Sadie Hoffman



Gwendolyn Smith

Miller Place High School was named as a New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSA) School of Distinction. To earn the School of Distinction Award, 100% of a schools' varsity teams must qualify and receive the Scholar-Athlete team award (75% of that team's roster must average above a 90.0 grade point average).

MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

7 Memorial Drive, Miller Place, NY 11764

Board of Education: Lisa Reitan, *President* • Bryan Makarius, *Vice President* • John Galligan, *Trustee*
Andrea Spaniolas, *Trustee* • Johanna Testa, *Trustee* • Lucy Chang, *Student Representative*
Superintendent of Schools: Seth A. Lipshie