



The Panther Press

WINTER 2025

MILLER PLACE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

www.millerplace.k12.ny.us

Miller Place School District Celebrates Excellence in Education and Athletics

The Miller Place School District recently celebrated two important milestones in academics and athletics, honoring the achievements of students, educators, and athletes alike.

At Miller Place High School, the National Honor Society induction ceremony welcomed eighty-six new members. These students were recognized for their outstanding academic achievements, leadership, and community involvement. In addition, Ms. Annicelli, a beloved Physics and Chemistry teacher, was inducted as an honorary member of the National Honor Society in recognition of her exceptional contributions to education at the high school.

The district also celebrated its student athletes at a National Letter of Intent signing ceremony, where sixteen seniors committed to continuing their athletic and academic careers at the collegiate level. The athletes, proudly wearing sweatshirts emblazoned with their future colleges' logos, were honored for their hard work and dedication to both their sports and academics. This ceremony highlighted the district's commitment to fostering excellence in every aspect of student life.

Additionally, at North Country Road Middle School, fifty-six students were inducted into the National Junior Honor Society. These students were recognized for their academic success, leadership, and service to their community. Mrs. Lynch was honored as the honorary member of the year.

These events reflect the Miller Place School District's commitment to fostering excellence in both academics and athletics, preparing students for continued success in their future endeavors.



After signing their letters of intent, Miller Place High School seniors represent the colleges they plan to attend next school year.



North Country Road Middle School students being inducted into the Junior National Honor Society.

A Message from Superintendent Seth Lipshie

The school year is well underway as students have adjusted to their new routines and continue to explore opportunities as we move into the winter. Extra-curricular activities are available, and we witnessed one of the most successful fall sports seasons in recent memory. Students had a successful winter concert season. We have had some amazing activities taking place in our classes that can be seen on our Facebook page.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share an update on the Miller Place UFSD Five-Year Strategic Plan. At the November 20th Board of Education meeting, I presented a comprehensive update, which can be found on the District's website under the Strategic Plan page. The update includes activities and actions related to each of the plan's Pillars and outlines next steps in the process. Below are some results from that presentation comparing pre-strategic plan data from 2022 to 2024:

COURSES AND EXAMS	RESULTS AND ENROLLMENT
10 Regents Exams Administered	Passing rate increased in 8 of the 10 exams. One exam remained flat.
10 Regents Exams Administered	Mastery rate increased by more than 10% in 7 of the 10 exams.
Advanced Placement Courses	Enrollment increased by 16%.
College Bearing Courses	Scores improved by 16%. Enrollment increased by 70%.

In a survey given to students in grades 8 through 12, the percentage of respondents providing a perspective who agreed with each survey statement (excluding neutral respondents) resulted as follows:

SURVEY STATEMENT	AGREE
Grading practices are clearly articulated.	86%
Most of my classes are challenging me to be a better student.	85%
Students in grades 10 through 12, Miller Place offers elective courses that are most helpful to my educational future.	71%
I am proud to be a member of the Miller Place UFSD community.	*84%

** An increase of 26% from the initial survey.*

In December, we surveyed parents and guardians. In January, we will survey all staff to gather additional feedback to continue improving student success and make Miller Place the best district possible.

I look forward to continuing our work together. Empowering excellence today, developing tomorrow's achievers, forever Miller Place proud.

A Message from the Board of Education

Happy New Year! As we begin 2025 and the second half of the school year, it's a great time to reflect on the incredible accomplishments of the first half and look ahead to the opportunities in the months to come. We are particularly proud of the academic strides made, including impressive progress on AP and Regents Exams. The dedication of our students and staff is evident in these achievements, which showcase the strength of our educational programs. This success was also highlighted at our November Board of Education meeting, where we celebrated numerous student achievements in music, academics, and athletics, demonstrating the well-rounded excellence of our students.

The first half of the year has been filled with remarkable accomplishments from our school community. Whether excelling in academics, the arts, athletics, or community service, our students have shown resilience and excellence. These successes inspire us to continue striving for even greater achievements. Guided by our Strategic Plan, we remain focused on Academic Excellence, Health and Wellness, District Finances, and Communication and Collaboration to ensure the best possible educational experience for our students.

The Board of Education also wants to remind the community that it's almost time to begin developing the district's budget for the next school year. We encourage all community members to participate in upcoming budget meetings and workshops. Your input is vital as we work to create a budget that balances fiscal responsibility with support for the academic excellence and opportunities that matter most.

Thank you for your continued support. I encourage you to stay engaged as we build on this year's successes and work toward making the rest of the school year just as impactful.

Miller Place Proud!

Always,
Lisa Reitan
President, Miller Place Board of Education

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS AND COMMENDED SCHOLAR

As part of the National Merit Scholarship Program, the National Merit Semifinalists and Commended Students are honored for their remarkable academic potential, reflected in their exceptional performance on the qualifying test for the program. Lucy Chang and Sean Pepe have been selected to advance in the National Merit Scholarship process as a Semifinalists. Andrew McGuirk has earned recognition as Commended Scholar for his achievements.

Congratulations to all three students on their dedication to academic excellence.



Lucy Chang

National Merit Semifinalist



Sean Pepe

National Merit Semifinalist



Andrew McGuirk

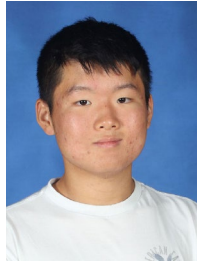
National Merit Commended Scholar

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AP SCHOLARS!

The AP Program honors high school students who have demonstrated exceptional college-level achievement through their performance on multiple AP Exams.



Josie
Attisano



Jonathan J.
Bang



Antonio D.
Bencivengo



Marena G.
Bielenda



Abigail R.
Bosshard



Fiona
Burzynski



Nicholas
Calandrino



Brooke I.
Callaghan



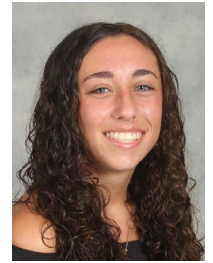
Natalie R.
Cervenka



Lucy
Chang



Matthew J.
Cirrito



Desiree V.
Clasen



Anders V.
Dalberg



Meadow V.
Dalberg



Emily E.
Darragh



Carrie G.
Davis



Richard R.
DeVito



Valentina
DiGiuseppe



Katelynn M.
Dimaiuta



Michael J.
Drago



Angelica M.
Efstathiou



Erin R.
Felser



Brandon M.
Ferrara

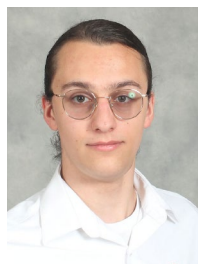


Ashia
Gaskin-Gordon

AP SCHOLARS CONTINUED



Kaitlyn E.
Goetz



Jacob P.
Huwer



Dane K.
Lagrasta



Jake B.
Lauther



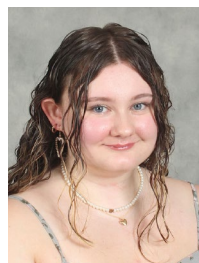
Jamie T.
Lewis



Lucas A.
Lockel



Andrew T.
Mcguirk



Taylor R.
McHugh



Jason R.
Miletti



Ashlyn J.
Mistretta



Sofia E.
Moore



Isabella S.
Morano



Bradford B.
Mulvey



Virginia A.
O'Hanlon



Evelyn M.
Paul



Sean L.
Pepe



Kayla N.
Portigiano



Nailah
Rahman



Julianna M.
Skoblicki



Gwendolyn R.
Smith



Lorilei S.
Specht



Nicholas S.
Vallary



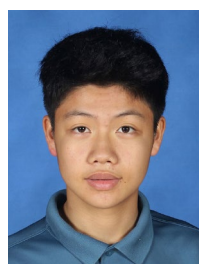
Claire V.
Wagner



Skye
Welch



Richard P.
Wink



Stephen
Ye



Isabella J.
Zaher



Diana R.
Zarbanelian



Ava M.
Zicchinelli



Bianca
Zou

AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

ANDREW MULLER PRIMARY SCHOOL

At **Andrew Muller Primary School**, we are enhancing our science curriculum with Mystery Science to further engage students in hands-on learning.

In kindergarten, students are studying weather and its impact on our seasons and environment. They are learning how weather affects the color change in leaves and will soon explore extreme weather events. First grade students are exploring the moon and stars, discussing seasonal changes in daylight and how the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. Second grade students are focused on the Properties of Matter. Students are learning to classify materials as conductors or insulators through experiments, such as designing hats for different climates using various materials.

Mystery Science is making learning exciting and impactful for our students!



LADDIE A. DECKER SOUND BEACH SCHOOL



In Grade 4 science, **Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School** students took part in a lesson named “A Walk in the Park,” a special unit focused on ecosystems. Over two days, each class took an investigative walk to the Miller Place Duck Pond, examining its ecosystem and engaging in hands-on learning.

During a scavenger hunt, students identified plants and animals living in the pond, noting the sounds and species present. They explored the roles of producers, consumers, and decomposers, and learned how species interact in a pond environment. This experience deepened their understanding of ecosystems and the importance of preserving natural habitats.

The lesson connected to their grade 4 social studies unit on geography and resources, where students used their knowledge of local geography and mapping to compare their community with other regions in the state.

NORTH COUNTRY ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL

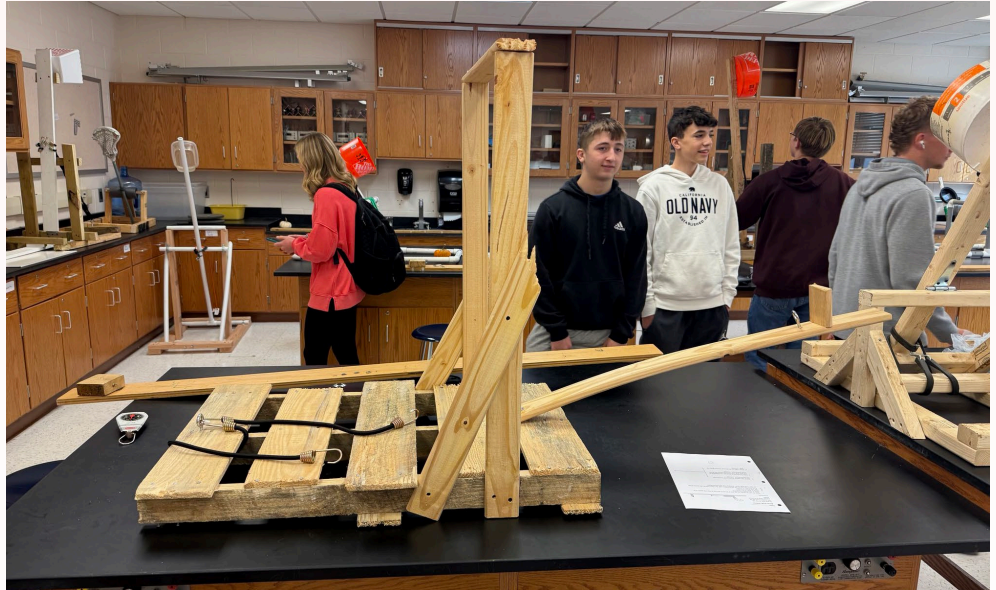
On November 8, **North Country Road Middle School** had the privilege of hosting Master Sergeant Jackowski as a special guest speaker in Ms. DeRosa’s class. During his visit, Master Sergeant Jackowski shared his personal experiences and insights from his time in the military, offering students a meaningful perspective on service and sacrifice. His presentation inspired and engaged the students, encouraging them to reflect on the importance of Veterans Day. Thank you, Mr. Jackowski, for your service and for inspiring our students!



AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

MILLER PLACE HIGH SCHOOL

Recently, Mr. Agostino's physics students at **Miller Place High School** had the opportunity to put their engineering skills to the test with a pumpkin launch! In this hands-on activity, students applied key physics principles to design and build catapults capable of launching pumpkins. The project allowed students to explore concepts such as force, motion, and trajectory. By combining creativity with scientific knowledge, the activity not only reinforced their learning but also fostered teamwork and problem-solving skills.



ATHLETICS NEWS

Miller Place School District Celebrates the New Gymnasium at Andrew Muller Primary School

The Miller Place School District recently celebrated the completion of its new, state-of-the-art gymnasium at Andrew Muller Primary School with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Seth Lipshie, joined District Administration and Board of Education members for the event.

“The completion of our new gymnasium provides our students with an exciting, modern space for physical education,” Mr. Lipshie said. “We are grateful to everyone who helped make this possible and look forward to using the new facility in the new year.”

Located to the left of the main entrance, the gym was part of the District's bond referendum, approved by voters in October 2021. Construction began in September 2023 and is part of a broader effort to enhance the District's facilities through various upgrades and projects.



MUSIC AND ARTS NEWS

All County Concert Features Five Miller Place High School Orchestra Members

Miller Place High School orchestra students participated in the prestigious NYSCAME All County Concert on Friday, November 16, at Hauppauge High School. Pictured (from left to right) are Nailah Rahman, Lucy Chang, Marc Lindemann, Stephen Ye, and Jacob Huwer, who represented our school with pride and musical talent.



Celebrating Student Art: Miller Place's Rising Stars

Miller Place High School's art program continues to shine with the impressive work of several talented students. In the recent NYSATA Region #10 exhibition, three students stood out for their creativity and skill across various mediums. Amelia Avalos, an 11th grader, presented *Scarab Zentangle*, a detailed black pen design that blends the precision of a scarab beetle with the calming patterns of zentangle. Her piece demonstrates a keen ability to create depth and texture. Fellow 11th grader Sabrina Schafer showcased *Still Life*, an exquisite graphite and Prismacolor pencil drawing. Through careful shading, Sabrina brought everyday objects to life, masterfully capturing light and shadow. Senior Josie Attisano also impressed with her dynamic oil painting, *The Rider*, which conveyed movement and emotion through rich color and brushwork. These students, guided by art teacher Jeffrey Corbett, are shining examples of Miller Place's strong arts program.

In Ms. Wood's 6th grade art class, students recently explored landscape painting using watercolor, a medium known for its translucent, glowing effect. The students learned to start with a light wash of color, gradually building depth to create realistic skies and grass. Ms. Wood, a practicing artist and member of the Mother Creatix Collective, shared her expertise in watercolor painting, helping her students develop new skills that will serve them well in future projects.

The Art Department also congratulated 9th graders Jenna Kurian, Fei Shi Zhong, and Keira Vogt for advancing to *Drawing and Painting I* based on their exceptional skill and dedication. These students, along with the artists featured in the NYSATA exhibition, reflect the ongoing success and commitment to artistic excellence at Miller Place.



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