

Bulletin Board

Middle Country Central School District

ISSUE X OF DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT

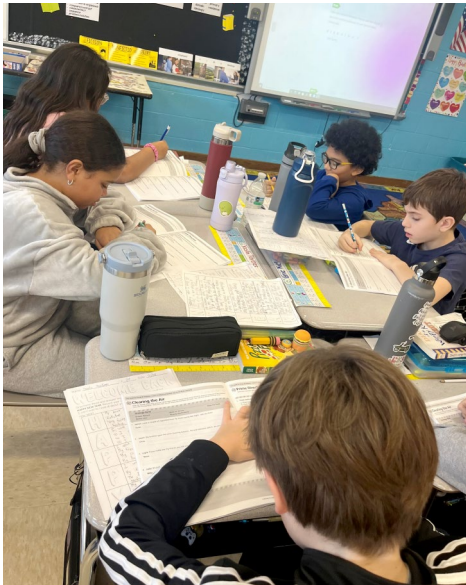
The Middle Country Central School District's elementary schools are where our students begin their educational journeys and learn fundamental skills that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Our youngest minds are afforded unique experiences that often extend beyond the classroom, offering them the chance to grow, thrive, and discover their potential. Students explore their talents through the arts, music, sports, and more.

This newsletter highlights some of the incredible opportunities our students enjoy every day—from engaging, hands-on lessons to participating in charity drives that teach the value of giving back, further enriching the student experience. Our elementary school students benefit from a vibrant learning environment filled with a variety of activities that foster critical thinking and communication skills. Our schools also emphasize social-emotional learning, helping students better understand their emotions and how to build positive relationships and make responsible decisions. Every day is an opportunity for our young learners to expand their horizons, develop new skills, and create lasting memories in a supportive and nurturing community. With a strong foundation in place, our students are well-prepared for success as they progress through the Middle Country Central School District.

Jericho Elementary School

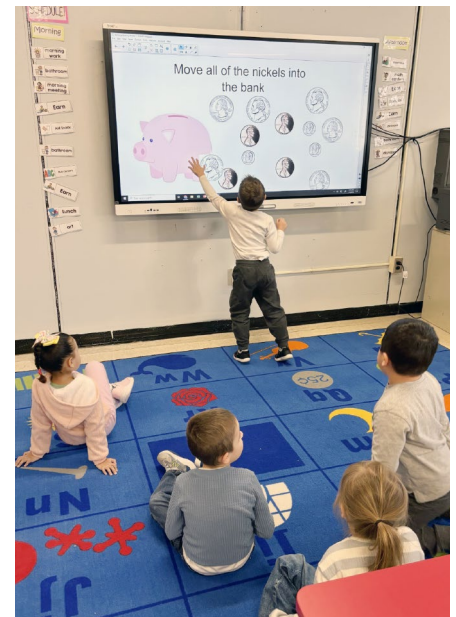
Too Good for Drugs

Too Good for Drugs is a K-12 prevention program aimed at reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. The lessons at Jericho introduce and develop skills for making healthy choices, building positive friendships, developing self-efficacy, communicating effectively, and resisting peer pressure. Prevention specialists from YMCA Family Services provide these evidence-based programs to our students. Too Good for Drugs teaches five essential character development skills to build self-efficacy, promote healthy development, and academic success: setting reachable goals, making responsible decisions, identifying and managing emotions, communicating effectively, and bonding with pro-social others.



PRAISE

Jericho hosts several PRAISE classes; PRAISE stands for Promoting and Reinforcing the Acquisition of Independent Skills Effectively. Students in the PRAISE program work hard each day to meet their individualized learning goals. With the help of their support team—which includes teachers, aides, assistants, and other service providers—students work on academic, social, and self-management goals. Learning experiences are fun and engaging, with instructors using a great deal of movement, sensory experiences, and flexibility. Students in the PRAISE program love playing on the playground and enjoy all of their special area classes, such as music, library, and physical education. The students enter the building each day with smiles on their faces and are excited to work with their friends and staff members.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT

New Lane Memorial Elementary School

Outdoor Classroom

Students at New Lane are enjoying a new outdoor classroom. The space features an octagonal bench that can accommodate a full class, picnic tables, log seating, and beautiful landscaping designed to create a serene learning environment. The outdoor classroom was created as a tribute to Sue Rossi, New Lane's beloved nurse, who passed away last year, and it reflects her passion for education and love for her students. Many classes have begun utilizing the outdoor classroom for interactive read-alouds, nature writing lessons, and scavenger hunts.



Civic Readiness

For years, the New Lane Tigers have proudly represented the school, but it was recently noted that their tiger mascot did not have a name! As an exercise in promoting civic readiness, students and staff voted for their favorite name out of five options: Tucker, Tillie, Taylor, Troy, or Romeo. On November 4, students and staff filled out their ballots as part of a school-wide vote. The votes were tallied, and with 249 votes, Tucker was chosen as the name of our fierce and beloved mascot! Let the New Lane Tigers pride roar.

Oxhead Road Elementary School

STEM Lab

The STEM Lab at Oxhead Road is a wonderful gathering place for STEM activities, adventures, and learning. It is used by all students at the school for activities such as computer science coding and LEGO engineering. The space is also used for exciting in-school field trips with the Cradle of Aviation as well as the fifth grade comprehensive science investigations. The lab allows students to engage in hands-on STEM lessons that stimulate their minds and promote growth.



Veterans Day Parade

Oxhead Road hosted its first Veterans Day Parade on November 7. Students and staff lined the bus circle and proudly displayed handmade posters honoring local veterans. The visiting veterans—who are family members of Oxhead Road students and staff—walked in the parade and were given an enthusiastic reception, which included energetic cheers and homemade cards and pictures created by the students. Afterward, everyone joined in the cafeteria to enjoy snacks and take part in a patriotic sing-along. It was a meaningful event that instilled a sense of pride in all.

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Stagecoach Elementary School

Fire Department Visits

Stagecoach hosted Fire Prevention Day on October 2, during which the Selden Fire Department visited students and invited them to participate in interactive fire safety presentations designed to promote awareness and preparedness. The students learned essential fire safety tips, the importance of creating a family escape plan, and how to stay safe in the event of a fire. Afterward, students had the unique opportunity to explore real fire trucks and learn about the equipment that firefighters use in emergencies. The event provided not only practical knowledge about the importance of fire safety but also created lasting memories for the Stagecoach students as they interacted with their local heroes.



Cradle of Aviation

Fourth and fifth graders at Stagecoach—and all other elementary schools—have the opportunity to engage with Cradle of Aviation Museum educators four times a year. These visiting educators bring the museum to our STEM labs and work with students to solve real-world challenges designed to instill a sense of wonder around Long Island's role in space exploration. Fourth grade tasks focus on the engineering process and address environmental engineering as it relates to weather, climate change, and pollution, while fifth graders focus on aerospace engineering.

North Coleman Road Elementary School

Art and Music

In Middle Country schools, all elementary students in grades K-5 attend general music and art classes once a week. Upon entering fourth grade, students can choose to learn how to perform with a band or orchestra instrument, or sing in the chorus. Based on their performances, fourth and fifth graders perform in the school concerts throughout the year and may be honored as a Friends of Music Student of the Trimester. Fifth graders can also be selected to perform in the SCMEA All-County band, orchestra, or chorus—a special distinction. At North Coleman Road, the band has performed at functions such as the Tree Dedication and Teacher Appreciation. Recently, the Newfield High School Drum Club visited the school to put on two lively performances with the younger students, sharing their love of drumming to inspire the students to continue to excel through their music studies. North Coleman students enjoyed experimenting with the drums and other instruments, and some were even invited up to dance and play the big drum!



‘It Starts With Hello’ Week



Students and staff at North Coleman Road recently participated in “It Starts With Hello” Week as part of the Sandy Hook Promise. An impactful week of activities was planned to promote kindness and friendship, prevent bullying, and create a support system with one simple word: Hello. Each day called for

something different—like wearing mismatched socks, dressing in a shirt with kind words, and wearing something green to promote inclusivity and unity. The goal is to make sure all of our families and friends feel safe and loved at school. “It Starts With Hello” Week serves as a great opportunity to meet new friends and catch up with old ones.

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Holbrook Road Elementary School

Hatching Quail Eggs

Each spring, Holbrook Road celebrates its tradition of hatching quail eggs. It is an educational activity that both students and staff love—one that creates meaningful memories and a real connection to the school. Students love this activity, and everyone can feel the extra excitement in the air on the day the tanks and incubators are put out on display in the main office window. Students also wave to the webcam installed overlooking the eggs as if thousands of viewers are watching them wave!



Citizenship Projects

Holbrook Road fifth graders have been hard at work on their Citizenship Projects. This year, as part of the Character Education Program, students voted to spread some holiday cheer to residents in a local nursing home. Under the direction of Character Education Teacher Ms. Fitzgerald, Library Teaching Assistant Ms. Antonelli, and Art Teacher Ms. Angeletti, students created 100 holiday cards with cheerful holiday messages and crafted beautiful snowmen as gifts to accompany the cards. The crafts were gifted to the residents at Jefferson's Ferry in Port Jefferson. It was a great way to give back and spread kindness during the holiday season.

Eugene Auer Memorial Elementary School

PAES Lab

The PAES Lab, or Practical Assessment Exploration System Lab, is a research-based assessment system at Eugene Auer that identifies students' readiness for community-based employment, functional skills, interests, and work-behavior strengths and barriers. This transformative educational tool is designed to simulate a real-world work environment, providing students with the hands-on experience needed to develop essential career skills. In this dynamic classroom setting, students engage in various simulated job tasks that mirror real workplace scenarios, allowing them to build a strong foundation for future employment. Students hone their ability to think critically, and the PAES Lab helps students develop a proactive mindset that will serve them well in their future jobs.



Arts in Education

Students at Eugene Auer learned about dinosaurs during an engaging science assembly, which featured large inflatable versions of the prehistoric animals, allowing the students to see them up close! During the Dinoman Program Assembly, students learned about some of their favorite scientists, early civilizations, fossils, and dinosaur bones. The theatrical program is part of the BOCES Arts in Education initiative, generously brought into our Middle Country schools by the PTAs. This additional enrichment programming brings artists and unique lessons for integrating music, theater, dance, literary arts, visual arts, and media arts into the classroom beyond the regular experience.



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Unity Drive Pre-K/Kindergarten Center

Thanksgiving Drive

Unity Drive's annual Thanksgiving Drive has seen another year of success. The building-wide effort brings the school community together to help needy families for the holidays. Our November curriculum topic, "What Makes a Community," coincided with the Holiday Turkey Feather Drive, reinforcing the concept that it is kind to help people in our community. Students and their families decorated paper feathers to dress a large turkey displayed in our hallway. As feathers were added, the turkey grew, and students proudly pointed out their contributions. Teachers highlighted how families worked together to create the beautiful display while supporting our community. For each feather created, the families were asked to make a nominal donation to help provide Thanksgiving food or supermarket gift cards to families in need at Unity Drive.



MindUP

Unity Drive students have been focusing on "mindful senses" as part of the MindUP program, an evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum created by the Goldie Hawn Foundation. MindUP team leaders, who were trained by the program, worked with staff to implement classroom strategies to enhance children's emotional well-being and resilience through mindfulness practices and an understanding of brain science. The "mindful senses" theme encourages mindfulness through focused attention activities that facilitate emotional balance and awareness. The program is aligned with the District's Character Education curriculum, and emphasizes the following key practices: building positive relationships, creating supportive environments that enhance learning, and teaching social-emotional skills. Some activities included a mindful seeing experience, yoga practices, creating a gratitude tree, and using mindful conversation starters at our whole group instruction.



Bicycle Path Pre-K/Kindergarten Center

Kindness Counts

At Bicycle Path, students have been working on being active and engaged citizens of our school community. Since the Character Education focus for November was citizenship, what better way to demonstrate what it means to be a good citizen than to practice showing kindness to others! Students received a "kindness calendar" that featured a month full of kind activities to practice at home. At school, students received recognition for their good deeds by having their names announced in the morning and receiving a "bucket filler" necklace. Students also decorated the school's "bucket filler" mural wall with a heart or star to accompany their good deed.



Storytelling Through Music

At Bicycle Path, students embark on a creative journey that blends storytelling and music in magical ways. During music classes, students hone their listening and storytelling skills while exploring the "four voices"—whisper, talk, shout, and sing. They listen attentively to a story and bring it to life by transforming themselves into characters, using their voices expressively and adding instrumental sounds to enrich the narrative. This hands-on approach not only enhances their understanding of music and storytelling, but also fosters collaboration, imagination, and confidence in self-expression.



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Universal Pre-K

The Middle Country Central School District's Universal Pre-K (UPK) program is thriving. The program offers full-day and half-day scheduling options for all eligible children turning four years old on or before December 1, without the need for a lottery system. By eliminating the lottery system, we ensure that every eligible family has access to the program, making high-quality early childhood education equitable and readily available. Registration is held at the Middle Country Central Registration Office and at the Middle Country Public Library. It is a large program—close to 500 students are enrolled.

Focus on Whole-Child Development

The Universal Pre-K curriculum emphasizes literacy, math readiness, social-emotional skills, and hands-on exploration to build a strong foundation for kindergarten and beyond through thematic-based learning. Outdoor classrooms in each building allow students to explore, boost motor skill development, and engage in hands-on learning.

Community Collaboration

Families benefit from strong connections with schools and community-based organizations, as well as resources to support their child's educational journey. We offer Special Education services both within the District and at our partnering organizations, and utilize monthly newsletters sent to families to stay connected. The program also finds opportunities to take children into the community, such as the Middle Country Public Library, where parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child's learning. Additionally, many Arts in Education programs are brought in to the UPK program. We have monthly yoga sessions, springtime Soccer Shots, a fall Teddy Bear Clinic, a fall Fire Safety session, early spring Dental Health Month, and summer Benner's Farm trips.



Hawkins Path Elementary School

GaGa Pit

Hawkins Path has an exciting new addition for playtime: the GaGa ball pit! Physical Education Teacher Mr. Lavery spent the first few weeks of school teaching every student the rules of the game and how to play it safely. It provides our students with much-needed physical activity and reinforces teamwork and good sportsmanship. The students are having fun and loving it during outdoor recess! Working with Hawkins Path Principal Kristi Leonard and the District's business office, the PTA donated funds to allow for the purchasing of the GaGa ball kit.



Physical Education

Students in Mr. Lavery's physical education class recently competed in the annual Hawkins Path Jump the Donut Championship. Sponsored by Duck Donuts in Selden, the game was challenging and engaging for all students who participated. The fifth grade winners were Gianna Hsieh and Giuliana Schaefer, the fourth grade winners were Moritzio Frederick and Jesse Fried, the third grade winners were Christopher Cano and Corin Timms, and the second grade winners were Hayes Edmonds and Mahreen Sahiya.



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Humanities Expo

Middle Country is celebrating a decade of recognizing elementary students' literacy achievements in ELA and social studies at the Humanities Expo (formerly the Literacy Expo). The event showcases writing from all of our elementary authors and the winners of our "Telling Our Story" and "Taking a Stand" essay contests. Students and their families engage in workshops and activities that promote literacy and social studies skills at home, and they have the opportunity to meet and learn from published Long Island authors and local organizations. This includes members of the Long Island Children's Writers and Illustrators group (LICWI), the Middle Country Public Library, and the Three Village Historical Society. **The theme of this year's program is "Middle Country Through the Decades," and it will be held on Monday, March 24, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Newfield High School.**



Annual STEM Celebration

Each May, students are challenged with the opportunity to showcase their innovative ideas at the District's annual STEM Celebration. The 2023-2024 school year commemorated the 10th anniversary of the event, and the community took a walk down STEM-ory lane to reflect on a decade of accomplishments. Students in grades K-5 participate in STEM challenges within their classrooms and display their work at the Districtwide celebration. Community members complete on-demand challenges led by scholars at the secondary level in collaboration with the Elementary STEM Committee members. Elementary students also get a chance to learn about secondary students' achievements in science research and robotics. **Join us on Monday, May 19, 2025, for this year's STEM Celebration from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at Centereach High School!**

MIDDLE COUNTRY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Moving Up in Middle Country

Moving up in the Middle Country Central School District is a special time for our youngest students. Moving up ceremonies at the elementary schools recognize our students' hard work before they take on the next chapter of their academic journeys. And the Senior Walkthrough has become a special tradition: seniors from Centereach and Newfield high schools take a trip down memory lane as they visit their former elementary schools. Seniors donned their graduation caps and gowns and were met with enthusiastic cheers and applause from current elementary students, teachers, and staff. It inspires our elementary students to dream big!



Field Day

Students come together each year to celebrate and play fun games at the District's annual field days. Exciting activities coupled with snacks makes for an engaging day of exercise and relaxation outdoors.



Paws of War

To honor their very own veterans—Mrs. Dana Mullally, who served in the Army, and Mr. Michael Horry, who served in the Air Force—Hawkins Path hosted the nonprofit Paws of War for an assembly in November. The Hawkins Path community generously donated dog and cat supplies to this organization, which is an amazing group that is known for helping those on “both sides of the leash”—local veterans and service animals.

