



7th Annual
nASTAR
Awards

June 12, 2025
Hofstra University Club

Jordan Almonte

Network Technician
East Williston UFSD

Jordan Almonte exemplifies the dedication, expertise, and professionalism that the NASTAR Award represents. As the lead network technician for the East Williston School District, Jordan consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that the district's infrastructure runs smoothly and efficiently. His proactive approach to problem-solving, attention to detail, and deep understanding of network systems have made him an indispensable part of the district's success. Jordan's commitment is evident in his responsiveness, reliability, and the respect he has earned from both colleagues and administrators. He plays a vital role in supporting instructional technology and ensuring that staff and students have the tools they need to succeed. His hard work, tireless dedication, and positive attitude are a true asset to the East Williston community.

Kenneth Altamirano

Elementary STREAM Teacher
Glen Cove CSD

Kenneth Altamirano's unwavering passion for education, coupled with his exceptional technological expertise, has made him a standout innovator in our district and an invaluable asset to our students.

Ken's journey in education began at Glen Cove nearly two decades ago, where he started as a primary classroom teacher. From the very beginning, it was clear that his dedication to student-centered learning and project-based approaches set him apart. His commitment to fostering an engaging and dynamic learning environment led him to transition into the district's STREAM position, where he has truly thrived. His ability to integrate technology in meaningful and impactful ways has been nothing short of inspiring.

Ken is a natural at using technology to meet the diverse needs of all students. Whether it's introducing coding concepts, creating interactive lessons, or leveraging cutting-edge tools, he ensures that every student—regardless of their learning style or level—has the opportunity to thrive. Ken has a passion for 3D printing and has introduced it in ways that spark creativity and innovation in students and even his colleagues. He has shown an impressive willingness to experiment and push boundaries by trying new technologies and incorporating them into his lessons. His passion for technology, his drive to incorporate the latest educational tools, and his consistent pursuit of excellence make him a true leader in the field.

Caitlin Baldyga
ENL Teacher
North Merrick UFSD

I am honored to nominate Caitlin Baldyga for her exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication to students and the school community. Caitlin has integrated technology into her ENL classroom through the creation of ENLOL, a tech-driven learning experience that brings humor, fosters language development, and drives student engagement. Her efforts support multilingual learners and demonstrate how creativity and instructional technology can transform learning. As a leader, she consistently shares fresh and practical ideas and presents new digital tools and strategies at faculty meetings, helping teachers improve instructional practices across grade levels. Caitlin actively contributes to the Technology Focus Group, enriching discussions with valuable insights. Outside of academics, she volunteers her time for community events, and had a major role in planning International Night, an event that celebrates diverse cultures and fosters inclusivity. Caitlin's creativity, generosity, and leadership make her an outstanding NASTAR. North Merrick is lucky to have Caitlin in our school community.

Steven Benner
Middle School Instructional Leader
Mineola UFSD

Steven Benner is a key member of the Mineola Middle School community, serving as an educator, instructional leader, and a passionate technology innovator. He adeptly integrates cutting-edge technology into the classroom, transforming how students and teachers engage in meaningful learning. Known for pioneering technology tools in education, Benner started with implementing Plickrs in Wantagh and is now leading implementation of AI in Mineola. A key aspect of his leadership is how he leads the “tech charge”, troubleshooting tech issues, introducing new ideas, and guiding effective technology use by students and teachers. He developed “scoreboards” for standards-based instruction, allowing students to demonstrate learning authentically. His notable video series, supports the Middle School’s “5 Gs of Learning” (Gut Check, Gear Up or Give Up, Goal Set Go For It, and Grow). Series examples like “Mineola Things” and “Mustang Potter” engage students and make them the center of production and learning. Benner collaborates with educators and district leaders to create a dynamic tech strategy, shaping a tech-forward culture at the school. Through his innovative approach, he prepares students for success in the digital age, and showcases technology as a powerful tool for agency.



Stacy Bianco

ENL Teacher
Bethpage UFSD

Mrs. Stacy Bianco, ENL Teacher at Charles Campagne Elementary School, exemplifies innovation and creativity in her instructional approach, consistently exploring new technologies to meet the diverse needs of her students and keeping them actively engaged in learning.

As a member of the school district's Magic School AI Pilot Team, Mrs. Bianco played a key role in the successful rollout of the program, using it to differentiate instruction in meaningful ways. Her ability to integrate technology purposefully into her classroom sets her apart, whether she is using Pixton to help students create comic strip stories, Kahoot for interactive assessments, or Vocaroo to incorporate voice into student projects, she brings learning to life in exciting and accessible ways.

Mrs. Bianco's adaptability, forward-thinking mindset, and commitment to meeting her students where they are make her an invaluable member of the Bethpage Schools community. Her passion for instructional innovation is inspiring, and she truly represents the spirit of the NASTAR Award.

Maddalena Buffalino

AP World Teacher, Key Club Advisor
Carle Place UFSD

For over twenty years, Maddalena has led the charge in integrating technology into education, empowering students, staff, and administrators across the district. Most recently, she designed and facilitated a transformative professional development series—EdTech Bootcamp 1, 2, 3, and 4—which provided hands-on training in essential educational tools. These workshops equipped educators with practical skills in Google Workspace, online assessment platforms, ParentSquare, ENL tools, Canva, AI applications, and more. Her expert guidance enabled participants to deepen their instructional design practices, particularly through advanced Canva techniques that enhance classroom engagement and creativity. Her vision, commitment, and innovative leadership have had a profound and lasting impact on teaching and learning throughout the district.

Wendy Carswell

Intermediate School Teacher
Locust Valley Central School District

Ms. Wendy Carswell is a passionate and innovative educator who exemplifies the spirit of the NASTAR Award through her exceptional use of technology in the classroom. A lifelong learner at heart, Ms. Carswell continually explores new digital tools and pedagogies with enthusiasm and thoughtful intention. Her lessons are not only engaging but also rooted in purposeful integration of technology to deepen student understanding and foster creativity. Known for her reflective practice and ever-present positive attitude, she consistently enhances her curriculum to meet the evolving needs of her students. Wendy's commitment to leveraging technology in meaningful ways makes her a truly deserving recipient of this award.

James Duffy

Principal, Francis F. Wilson Elementary School
Rockville Centre UFSD

Principal James Duffy is a true champion of technology and innovation in the classroom, from organizing the district's first "hackathons" to bringing responsible, ethical, and effective use of artificial intelligence platforms to elementary students. He consistently pushes technological boundaries to enrich student learning.

Under Mr. Duffy's leadership, technology is not an add-on but an integral part of daily instruction. He ensures that both students and teachers alike are equipped with the tools and training to use technology in a meaningful way.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Duffy's creative approach toward the active engagement of young learners with technology will prepare them well for the rapidly evolving technological landscape of the future. By nurturing curiosity and digital citizenship from a young age, Principal Duffy sets a powerful example of what a 21st-century education should look like.

Michelle Fattore

Physical Therapy Aide Teacher
Nassau BOCES Barry Tech

Dr. Fattore has been utilizing technology to enhance her lessons in her Physical Therapy Classroom for years. She is consistently looking for new ways to reach her students at their level, through different technology tools. This year, not only did she use TEAMS to set up and organize her classroom, but she also used the Anotomage Table, which is an interactive table that offers experiences for her students, and she has taken a deep dive into what AI has to offer for teachers and students. Dr. Fattore is always the first teacher to try out a new tech tool, always supports initiatives to include technology in the classroom to support teaching and learning, and frequently turnkeys her findings to her colleagues. Dr. Fattore oversees the webinars that are utilized for the health cluster in the building, is looked up to by staff in the building, and is a great mentor for new teachers. Dr. Fattore is a well deserving recipient of the NASTAR award.

Ashley Garry

Gifted and Talented Program Lead
Valley Stream 13 UFSD

Ms. Garry is up for any challenge and has molded our Gifted and Talented program into a challenging, technology-focused collaborative experience. Her curriculum is completely of her own design and has been recognized for its merits by several gifted organizations. She has also grown our push-in enrichment program to include our third graders with robotics and coding, while fourth grade deepens their focus on the laws of physics. Her explorations of AI are truly reflective experiences for our students and illustrate best teaching practices in this area. Having joined our district just two short years ago, Ms. Garry heads this program with excellence and is a fantastic addition to Valley Stream 13.

Kaitlyn Haggerty

Teacher

Freeport UFSD

I am honored to nominate Kaitlyn for the NASTAR Award, recognizing her dedication to technology integration and her innovative efforts to engage young learners. Kaitlyn seamlessly incorporates technology into daily lessons, using it to deepen understanding and spark curiosity. Her dynamic classroom fosters creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Her 2nd-grade students engage in coding and robotics each week, reinforcing academic concepts in enjoyable ways. Whether programming Bee-Bots or solving problems with Spheros, they build essential 21st-century skills through hands-on learning.

Kaitlyn empowers students to create content, guiding them in producing math tutorial videos and podcasts to inspire young writers. This allows them to demonstrate mastery and share their voices with a broader audience.

Beyond her classroom, Kaitlyn inspires colleagues by sharing her innovative practices, encouraging others to explore new technology integration methods. Her leadership promotes a culture of continuous learning and creativity within the school.

Through her vision, dedication, and student-centered approach, Kaitlyn exemplifies the spirit of the NASTAR Award and is a truly deserving candidate.

Keith Harrison

Technology Teacher

Oyster Bay-East Norwich CSD

This year Keith has gone above and beyond for his students. When administration came to him hoping to introduce more robotics to the technology curriculum, Keith jumped at the chance to take it one step further and introduce drones for our 6th graders. He worked tirelessly this year to be able to integrate drones into his curriculum in a safe and engaging way for students. The students have learned so much and are having a blast getting to fly and program their drones. Keith is always ready and willing to go above and beyond for his students, and that is why he is our NASTAR this year.

Richard Jankowski

Information Technology Specialist

Plainview-Old Bethpage CSD

The Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District proudly nominates Richard (Rich) Jankowski for the prestigious NASTAR Award. Since joining in 2016 with the Nassau BOCES technology team, Rich has been pivotal in advancing our technology initiatives, providing leadership and expertise that have transformed our district's approach to technology. His work includes supporting the 1:1 technology initiative and implementing a cutting-edge SD-WAN deployment to improve connectivity.

Rich advises administrators, staff, and educators on effective technology use and cybersecurity, ensuring the district stays ahead of threats. His collegiality and willingness to help have made him a valued colleague. Rich exemplifies what it means to be a technology innovator and leader.

His commitment to excellence and ability to inspire confidence make him an ideal candidate for the NASTAR Award. Rich is not only a remarkable resource for our district but also a shining example of the impact a passionate technology leader can have. We are grateful to recognize his outstanding contributions.




Brigitte Kahn
World Language Teacher
Massapequa School District

Brigitte Kahn, Massapequa's World Language teacher, exemplifies the spirit of the NASTAR awards through her innovative integration of technology in education. From the start of each class, she uses Google Forms to check in with students, ensuring she understands their needs before beginning instruction. Her Schoology course page serves as the foundation for daily language-learning and culture-building activities, providing students with easy access to essential resources. Frau Kahn leverages social media, memes, and reels to make German language and culture engaging and accessible, complemented by German music that sets a European mood. As a technology leader, she consistently volunteers to pilot new initiatives, participate in tech committees, and collaborate on AI guidelines. Her dedication to experimenting with new tools and methods aims to create the best possible language learning experience for her students. Brigitte Kahn truly embodies the innovative and student-centered approach celebrated by the NASTAR awards.

Marta Krauss
Computer Aide
New Hyde Park-Garden City Park UFSD

Marta Krauss has been a dedicated New Hyde Park-Garden City Park employee working in the district since 1999. She has also been an invaluable Technology Aide since 2003. As the Garden City Park technology aide, she has been a trusted advisor to both staff and students, helping them navigate technology to support their curriculum and foster growth. When her position expanded to two buildings, she rose to the occasion, bringing her skills to Manor Oaks while navigating new challenges.

Over the years, as technology rapidly advanced, Marta's position evolved, just as the needs of the district and its students have. Her adaptability, tenacity and industrious nature have been essential in keeping things running smoothly. When faced with challenges, Marta has always been there, tirelessly working to find solutions and making sure things get done!



Tammy LaCombe
Reading Teacher
Franklin Square UFSD

Ms. Tammy LaCombe is an extraordinary educator whose impact reaches far beyond the reading classroom. Having served in all three buildings across the district at one point or another, she brings a wealth of experience, having been a classroom teacher, special education teacher, reading specialist, and, most recently, interim assistant principal. Her deep understanding of instruction and her can-do attitude make her a go-to resource in the Franklin Square community. At Washington Street School, Ms. LaCombe also serves as a technology mentor. Whether she's providing support on innovative tools, guiding colleagues through tech integration, or stepping up to lead when needed, Ms. LaCombe does it all with humility, energy, and heart—and, as a true night owl, on very little sleep! Her unmatched work ethic and unwavering dedication make her an invaluable asset to our district and a shining example of a NASTAR!

Ric Marques

Systems Engineer & Project Manager
Hicksville UFSD

Ric Marques has been a pillar of Hicksville Public Schools' technology infrastructure since the early 2000s, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to seamless operations and technological advancement. For nearly three decades, his dedication and expertise have been key to the ensuring smooth functioning of the district's systems. Ric's proactive management of network issues, software updates, and understanding the intricacies of Apple, Google, PowerSchool, Cisco and Microsoft has been crucial in preventing disruptions, allowing educators and students to focus on Hicksville's core mission of teaching and learning.

Known for his efficient problem-solving, Ric goes above and beyond to provide technical support. His collaborative spirit and positive demeanor make him a valued colleague, always ready to share his knowledge and assist others. Though his contributions are often made behind the scenes, the impact of his work resonates district-wide. Ric's foresight in anticipating technological advancements implementing effective solutions has kept Hicksville Public Schools at the forefront of educational technology. His exceptional service makes Ric Marques a deserving NASTAR award recipient.



Kristy McNally

Librarian - Social Studies Teacher
Westbury UFSD

Kristy represents all Middle School Teachers as a member of the District Technology Committee. She has a deep understanding of the districts technology landscape and is an advocate for both teachers and the IT department in the Middle School. Her insights on how our current technology is impacting the MS teachers is a integral part of how we make decisions that lead to success. She is an innovative problem solver, and her passion inspires others in her building to adopt new technologies that enhance their curriculum. She is patient, honest and determined to do what is best for our students.



Peter Ostrander
Supervisor
Nassau BOCES

Peter has made great strides as our department's technology, data, and information systems leader. His work has elevated the workflow and data systems of our 11 schools and programs. Under his supervision, we have implemented and enhanced our new SIS and reporting mechanisms. Peter's vision for our technology services is to build a coherent program based on strong practices, innovative designs, and artificial intelligence. His work has had a powerful impact on the instructional and reporting outcomes of our schools/programs.

Dara Perlow

STELLAR Teacher At George Washington Intermediate School
West Hempstead UFSD

Dara Perlow showcases outstanding implementation of instructional technology at George Washington Intermediate School in the West Hempstead Union Free School District, creating a dynamic, tech-integrated learning environment in which students thrive through Project-Based Learning. As coach of the award-winning GW Hackathon team, she enhances students' technological literacy through innovative tools like Kidoyo, Marty the Robot, and Ozobots, fostering opportunities for critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Her cross-curricular approach, such as programming Ozobots to simulate planetary movement, connects coding with science concepts. Students eagerly attend her STELLAR class, drawn by her engaging methods and genuine care and dedication. A true educational innovator, Ms. Perlow continuously seeks new ways to inspire and engage learners of all abilities.

Mary Jane Radonic

Teacher of Technology
Diocese of Rockville Centre

Mary Jane Radonic has been the technology teacher at St. Aidan School for 27 years. During her time, Mary Jane has not only taught technology classes for students from Pre-K to Grade 8 but has overseen IT at the school as well. Mary Jane works collaboratively with every teacher to incorporate every subject into her innovative technology projects. Mary Jane implemented and continues to build upon the 1:1 device iPad program for St. Aidan School, one of the first schools to incorporate a 1:1 program in the Diocese. This program has been in place for almost 15 years. Moreover, Mary Jane always contributes at the Diocesan technology meetings, sharing her expertise and teaching her colleagues in other schools about the creative projects she uses with her students at St. Aidan School.

Renee Read

Special Education Teacher
Great Neck Public Schools

Renee Read is an exceptional special education co-teacher who excels in using instructional technology to enhance student learning. Currently working in two 4th grade classrooms, she skillfully employs digital tools to provide personalized accommodations, tailoring content to each student's needs. Whether adjusting iPad accessibility settings or creating differentiated tasks, she ensures all students receive the support they need to succeed.

Renee's dedication to technology extends beyond her classrooms as she creates and shares interactive and engaging resources, like Classkick assignments and IXL quizzes, with her PLC. Her innovative efforts not only benefit her students but also uplifts her broader teaching team. Renee's passion and innovative and collaborative spirit make her an outstanding recipient of this award, as her work exemplifies the best of what instructional technology can offer in the hands of a caring, skilled and collaborative educator.

Emily Siebold

Physical Education Teacher
Evergreen Charter School

Emily Siebold, the Physical Education teacher for grades 2–4 at Evergreen Charter Intermediate School, has been a remarkable educator for over three years. She effectively manages nearly 400 students by blending Physical Education with technology, using a Promethean panel, music, and interactive applications to make her classes engaging. Her innovative approach reaches all learning styles, creating a joyful and inclusive environment and fostering a love for learning and activity among students, while significantly boosting their engagement and improving behavior, and furthering understanding of Physical Education concepts.

During National School Choice Week, Evergreen Charter School's dance video, choreographed and recorded by Ms. Siebold, was featured on the official School Choice website, showcasing her commitment to education beyond the classroom. She not only incorporates technology in her lessons but also shares valuable tech tools and updates with colleagues.

Ms. Siebold is a valued member of our team and is known for her dedication and passion for teaching Physical Education, her positive attitude, and her empathy. For all of these reasons, Ms. Emily Siebold is our NASTAR for 2025.

Arashdeep Singh

District Technician
East Rockaway School District

As one of our district technicians, Arash consistently goes above and beyond with patience, professionalism, and a true problem-solving mindset. He plays an essential role in keeping technology running smoothly across all buildings. Whether a Newline board isn't working properly, a staff member is having login issues, or a student Chromebook needs repair, Arash provides dedication and top-notch support.

Many times, a teacher or administrator will submit a help ticket and Arash will appear out of nowhere. We suspect he has access to a hidden Helpdesk Highway! Somehow, he manages to show up within minutes, no matter which building you're in.

In addition to his technical expertise, Arash's warm smile and calm, friendly presence instantly put staff at ease, even when technology isn't cooperating.

Arash's reliability, expertise, and kind demeanor make him an invaluable part of our team and a true everyday hero in East Rockaway. We're lucky to have him on our team!

Congratulations



Kevin Steingruebner

Principal, Garden City High School
Garden City UFSD

As principal of Garden City High School, Kevin Steingruebner has been a visionary leader in advancing educational technology. Under his leadership, the school has prioritized student engagement, digital literacy, and future-ready skills through innovative practices.

Kevin has led the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into education, skillfully balancing innovation with responsibility. He actively participates in the district's "Tech Bytes" and "Pajama PD" professional development programs, leading by example.

A role model for his faculty, Kevin "walks the walk," using AI to enhance, not replace, the human elements of education while emphasizing the importance of ethical use and critical thinking.

His commitment to preparing students and staff for a digital future exemplifies 21st-century educational leadership. Kevin's work sets a standard for embracing technology to empower learners and support educators while upholding academic excellence and integrity. His forward-thinking leadership is invaluable to Garden City's growth in educational technology space.

Mrs. Roseann Zeblisky

Science Teacher
Seaford UFSD

Roseann Zeblisky is a forward-thinking, dedicated and passionate science educator at Seaford Middle School. For over twenty-nine years, she has been able to cultivate a love of science and innovation for Seaford's Middle School Scholars. Her use of various engaging instructional technology tools in her integrated science and forensic science classes has allowed her to bring all aspects of her middle school science curricula to life. Roseann's seamless integration of technology and science content serves as a model for other educators in the building. Her roles as the STEM Teacher Liaison, Science Club Advisor and Science Olympiad Coach are invaluable in creating a rigorous and cohesive STEM program that is able to challenge and reach every Seaford Middle School Scholar.

Lingling Xie

World Language Teacher
Herricks Public Schools

In her relatively short time at Herricks, culminating in her recent tenure, Lingling Xie has already established herself as a dynamic teacher who skillfully integrates technology to accelerate her students' proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. Her innovative approach is evident in her effective use of various tech tools, often app smashing – strategically combining multiple platforms within a single lesson to provide students with diverse avenues to demonstrate their learning and understanding.

Beyond her classroom, Ms. Xie has demonstrated leadership by introducing the Formative platform to her department, revolutionizing their use of technology for engaging activities and insightful assessments. Recognizing its wider potential, she has also shared her expertise by providing overviews of Formative to building leadership and teachers across the district, showcasing its transformative possibilities.

Ms. Xie's purposeful dedication to leveraging technology, including her creative app smashing techniques, consistently supports her students' learning and growing proficiency in Mandarin Chinese, making her a valuable asset to the Herricks school district.

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