



EAST ISLIP

UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2025

Class of 2025 Reaches INCREDIBLE MILESTONE

Woo Hoo



Congrats

East Islip High School held its 98th commencement ceremony on June 26. Seniors made the long and exciting walk from the high school's doors to the familiar site of Sal Ciampi Field at Boomer Esiason Stadium, as "Pomp and Circumstance" was performed by the high school's band and director Chris Neske.

To begin the ceremony, the school's advanced American Sign Language class interpreted the Pledge of Allegiance as well as "The Star-Spangled Banner," sung by Erin Ackerman, and "America the Beautiful," sung by Daniel Carroll, Julianna D'Addario, Tyler Hilms and Ella Tantillo. East Islip's Class of 1975, celebrating their 50th anniversary, was recognized, as were the top 25 academic seniors in the Class of 2025.

The first speaker, salutatorian Meeghan Mahon, reflected on how graduation is not a solo achievement, but accomplished with the support of family, friends, teachers, coaches and mentors.

"As you all step into the

future, make sure to remember the experiences you had here and the people you met," Mahon said. "But also remember that high school is just high school, and the best years of your life are yet to come."

Valedictorian Ryan Flad talked about the importance of being a lifelong learner.

"As we leave East Islip, I ask you to redefine how you think of learning," Flad said. "Go into the next stage of your life with a renewed interest in discovering, exploring and sharing knowledge. Take the initiative and never stop learning."

In his last graduation ceremony before retiring after more than 20 years of dedicated service to the students and families of East Islip, Principal Mark Bernard presented the Class of 2025 and Superintendent Paul Manzo presented him with an honorary diploma. Manzo went on to recount the many academic, artistic and athletic achievements and talents of the

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Class of 2025 Reaches INCREDIBLE MILESTONE

(continued from cover)

Class of 2025 throughout the past school year before offering some sage advice.

“Class of 2025, as you prepare to begin a new chapter, take a moment to reflect on the journey that has brought you here,” Manzo said. “Your hard work, commitment and dedication have led you to this incredible milestone, and I have no doubt that you are ready to take on the world that awaits you.”

Board of Education President Michael Dorgan congratulated the seniors on their many accomplishments, and reinforced the concept of the school’s slogan, EI Pride.

“Your efforts, dedication and hard work has brought you here to this occasion,” Dorgan said. “You have earned this moment. Enjoy it and always remember it fondly. Remember, whatever path you take from this point in life, East Islip will always be your home.”

Finally, Class of 2025 President Anna Franchi addressed her classmates.

“The world isn’t waiting for us, we are already shaping it,” Franchi told them. “With every choice, every word, every act of courage and compassion, we are already becoming the people we once looked up to.”

After each new graduate received their diploma and turned their tassel, hundreds of red caps flew through the air as cheers erupted from the stands, full of proud families ready to watch the newest EI alumni walk out into a new life.

Congrats  Woo Hoo



Senior SPOTLIGHT 2025

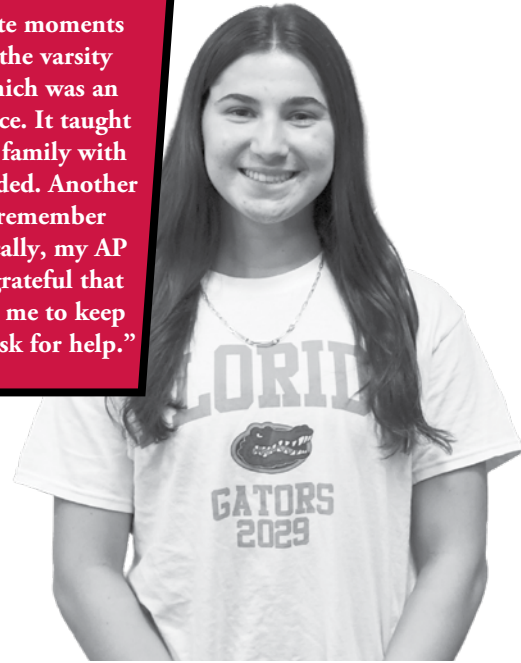


ROMEO SORIANO
(University at Albany)

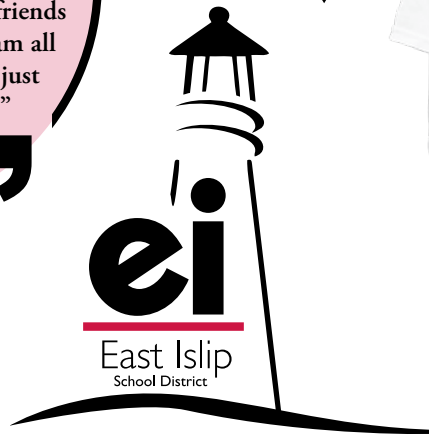
“I’m not originally from here, and when I came to ninth grade for the first day, it was just different and everybody was very welcoming. They accepted me with open arms, and I made a lot of friends very quickly. The basketball team all wanted to talk to me, and we just became friends from there.”

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“One of my favorite moments was being a part of the varsity gymnastics team, which was an eye-opening experience. It taught me how to become a family with the team, and we bonded. Another big moment I will remember forever was, unironically, my AP calculus class. I am grateful that I took it, as it taught me to keep pushing and how to ask for help.”



SOPHIA PEPE
(University of Florida)



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“One of my favorite things was doing the music shows, because you get to stay after and form friendships with kids you never thought you’d be friends with. Honors choir became very fun during my senior year. It never felt like we were working hard to learn our music and prepare for the concert because we were always having so much fun together.”

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JULIANNA D’ADDARIO
(Nazareth University)

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“I love the support that East Islip High School gave me in every aspect. I missed a lot of school because of going to figure skating competitions, but the school was always very understanding. Every single teacher supported me and wanted to see me succeed, so it’s a great feeling knowing that I have somewhere to come back to.”

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VANESSA ROSSA
(University of Massachusetts, Boston)

HS Recognizes Top 10 Seniors of Class of 2025

East Islip High School honored its 10 highest-ranking academic seniors of the Class of 2025 – including two sets of twins – with a breakfast celebration with administrators and school counselors in the school’s Forum. Honored were valedictorian Ryan Flad (who will attend Ohio State University), salutatorian Meeghan Mahon (Dartmouth College), Sameer Ali (Stony Brook University), Danielle Birner (Stony Brook University), Julianna D’Addario (Nazareth University), Georgia Hodge (University of Miami), Jesse Hodge (Stony Brook University), McKayla Mahon (University of Connecticut), Vanessa Rossa (University of Massachusetts, Boston) and Drew Walendowski (Villanova University).

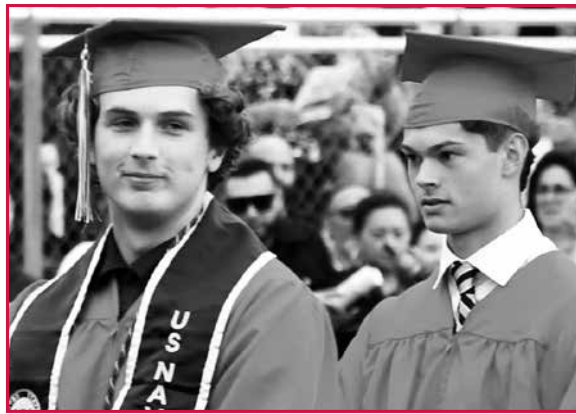


“We are very proud of the hard work, dedication and commitment that have earned you this honor,” Bernard told the seniors. “We look forward to hearing about the great things that you will accomplish.”

Dedicated Seniors Earn SEALS OF BILITERACY AND CIVIC READINESS

A total of 66 East Islip High School students were awarded the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness this spring. The NYSSCR Seal is intended to encourage civic knowledge and participation through experiential learning and the engagement of youth voice, leadership and action. The school also announced that 21 students earned the New York State Seal of Biliteracy for American Sign Language, Italian or Spanish this year, the highest number since the program’s inception. The Seal of Biliteracy is awarded to high school graduates who demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English and at least one other language, including ASL. Both seals appeared as special endorsements on the graduates’ diplomas and notations on their college transcripts.





EI Honors Those **OFF TO SERVE**

East Islip High School honors the six brave Class of 2025 graduates who are heading off to serve the nation in the military.

"Thank you for your service and commitment to keeping our nation safe," Superintendent Paul Manzo said. "Your dedication and sacrifice does not go unnoticed."

Steven Binsfeld – U.S. Navy
Christopher Dietrich –
U.S. Marine Corps

Frank Castaldo – U.S. Army
Vincent Fantauzzi – U.S.
Marine Corps (ROTC)

Drew McCarthy – U.S.
Coast Guard
Tyler Wichert – U.S. Navy

EIHS PRINCIPAL MARK BERNARD

Leaves Memorable Legacy



East Islip High School Principal Mark Bernard has retired after 22 years of dedication to the district and its students, first as math director, then East Islip Middle School principal and most recently as principal of the high school. He was honored with the SCOPE Administrator Service Award in March for his exemplary performance as an educator and administrator.

"Mr. Bernard's passion, commitment and support have made a lasting impact on our district, and we are truly grateful," Superintendent Paul Manzo said.

"He has been more than just an administrator, but an inspirational educator who has navigated the high school through challenges and triumphs, always serving in the best interests of the students," Board of Education President Michael Dorgan said. "Mr. Bernard's leadership has created an environment where students have been able to flourish, not only academically, but as individuals. His legacy will echo in the classrooms and halls of East Islip High School for all who have been lucky enough to have him as their principal."

HS Broadcasting Class Triumphs at **BASH Awards**

The 2025 BASH Awards at Hofstra University honored exceptional talent from broadcasting and film classes across Long Island, with East Islip High School proudly claiming first place for Best Anchor Duo. Seniors Juliana Banville and Julianna D’Addario earned this prestigious award, showcasing the exceptional skills and dedication they have developed over the years in the school’s video production program, guided by technology education teacher Bill Lackner. The annual BASH Awards highlight the creativity and hard work thriving within Long Island’s expanding broadcasting and film education community, and this year’s event was particularly competitive, making Banville and D’Addario’s achievement all the more remarkable. Their first-place BASH win underscores the talent and commitment of EI’s students and educators, shining a bright light on the flourishing broadcasting program and the promising future of media arts at EIHS.

“Winning Best Anchor Duo was something Jules and I have been hoping forever since we first heard about the event,” Banville said. “Learning how to effectively communicate in front of the camera and broadcasting information of the entire East Islip community has been a privilege and an honor, especially



since I get to do it with one of my best friends.”

“Broadcasting class is such a great time,” D’Addario said. “I look forward to learning, performing and laughing with my friends and colleagues each and every day. Being rewarded for something that you love just makes these moments even more special.”

“Being at BASH gives students the opportunity to see how other districts run their programs as well,” fellow senior Sophia Pepe said. “It provides an excellent foundation for the younger East Islip broadcast students to learn from and aspire towards making the program continue to grow and improve.”

FIFTH AND SECOND GRADERS Visit Next Year's Schools



Across the district, second and fifth grade students moving up to a new school enjoyed fantastic field trips to the buildings they will attend come September.

Fifth grade classes from JFK and RCK visited East Islip Middle School to learn what to expect next year. They were welcomed by school administrators who gave a brief introduction and shared important information. The middle schoolers then led

small group tours, showing the visitors the classrooms, cafeteria and other key areas. After the tour, the

fifth graders participated in a Q&A session where they asked questions about lockers, homework and clubs.

Meanwhile, second graders from Connetquot and Timber Point went on field trips to visit their soon-to-be new home at JFK and RCK. At JFK, the younger students visited the library, where they were greeted by older students happy to welcome them to the building. They also walked through the gym and cafeteria, watched orchestra and band members playing their instruments during lessons, met talented artists who were creating art projects, and heard wonderful singing in the music room.



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EIHS INCOMING SENIOR ANGEL MAI

Joins Board of Education



The East Islip Board of Education added an ex officio student Board member this year, incoming East Islip High School senior Angel Mai. This nonvoting, uncompensated position, mandated by New York State law, allows high school students to serve on a school board in an advisory capacity and make student voices heard. Mai was introduced and sworn in during the Board's annual reorganization meeting on July 1.

"I feel pretty excited about becoming an ex officio student Board member because this is a new start to the journey of my life, and I hope that I can help achieve new things," Mai said.

PATRICK CHOCKO SERVES AS

NATIONAL YOUTH AMBASSADOR FOR TOURETTE'S

Patrick Chocko, a recent East Islip Middle School graduate, has taken a remarkable step into national advocacy as a National Youth Ambassador for Tourette syndrome, a neurological condition characterized by tics, which are sudden, rapid, repetitive movements or sounds. Last year, he began working with the Long Island chapter of the Tourette Association of America. After gaining experience through local presentations, he was proudly selected into the TAA's prestigious 2025 Youth Ambassador Program.

In March, Chocko traveled to

Washington, D.C., to participate in the TAA's annual Ambassador training, preparing him and his fellow ambassadors to serve as an advocate for individuals living with Tourette syndrome and other tic disorders. The following day, Chocko participated in National Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, where the ambassadors met with lawmakers to discuss policy initiatives and raise awareness about the needs of the Tourette's community. Most recently, Chocko presented locally to the NYU Grossman Long Island School of Medicine.



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Visit our website at www.eischools.org

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