



EAST ISLIP

UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FALL NEWSLETTER 2025



BACK TO SCHOOL ENERGY

East Islip Starts a New Year of Learning and Growth

East Islip welcomed students and staff back for a brand-new year of learning, growth and community in each of the district's six buildings. From prekindergarten youngsters excited to start their educational journey to seniors ready to prepare for life beyond high school, happy energy filled the halls and classrooms as the 2025-2026 school year began.



"Coming back to school has been really smooth. All the new administrators have been so nice, and I'm really excited for my senior year."

EIHS SENIOR ALISON ROSATI

It's been an exciting start to the new school year! The energy and enthusiasm in our schools are truly inspiring as students and staff embrace learning and collaboration. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation as we work Better Together to make this year a great success.

PAUL E. MANZO, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



"Accomplishments and success are truly the outcome of teamwork. I am proud to be a teacher in the East Islip School District, where we are committed to working collaboratively to provide each of our students with an exemplary education. By sharing, supporting and communicating with one another, we can provide a space where students can thrive and grow academically, emotionally and socially. Together, we are better."

JFK TEACHER AMY ELLIOTT



"A team that works together is better together, so let's get started. Have a great year!"

BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT STEPHEN RULAND

"I'm happy to be back in school because I get to learn and play football with all of my friends."

EIMS STUDENT COLTON IERARDI



"Building positive relationships with those around us is essential to achieving success at every level. When we work together, support one another and value each person's contribution, we create a stronger, more united community. This belief in being 'Better Together' is at the heart of our approach. It will not only help our students thrive academically and personally, but it will also strengthen the sense of connection and belonging that defines our school district. As we move through the 2025-2026 school year and beyond, our commitment to collaboration and community will empower our students to achieve greatness – together."

RCK PRINCIPAL JANET JONES



"The East Islip School District is growing stronger with every student, administrator and support staff who joins our team."

EAST ISLIP MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER WENDY FREES



"When we work together, we can all achieve our goals."

EIMS STUDENT JAYNE ELLIOTT



"Here in East Islip, we're more than a school district, we're a community."

EAST ISLIP MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TARA SCULLY



"I'm happy to be working with my friends every day in class."

EIMS STUDENT MEIGH BALLATO



"Together, we make a difference. Together, we inspire. Together, we are better!"

EAST ISLIP HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER GIUSEPPE COSTA



"I'm ready to learn with our great teachers."

EIMS STUDENT WILL BALLATO



"Being back to school is really nice, and it's really nice to see everyone again, all together here in East Islip."

EIHS JUNIOR CAYLEE SMITH



"Every day we see that a positive learning environment and growth is possible when we come together as a community."

TIMBER POINT SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST EMILY WALTER

"It takes every member of the elementary schools, middle school and high school to make East Islip what it is today."

EAST ISLIP MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL NICHOLAS SPIEGLER





A BEAUTIFUL POND RESTORED FOR BIOLOGY CLASSES AT MIDDLE SCHOOL

East Islip Middle School's pond has been beautifully restored into a serene home for wildlife, student art and hands-on science learning, thanks to the dedicated efforts of longtime EIMS science teacher Ray Lang, the generosity of alumni-owned partner Ron Gibbons Pools and the continued support of the district's For the Kids Foundation.

Lang began his East Islip teaching career in 1996, and currently teaches seventh and eighth grade science, including Regents Living Environment and life science classes. The history of the pond dates back over two decades ago, to the days when the school was still known as Islip Terrace Junior High School. Lang and then-Principal Bruce Castka developed the idea to enhance the school's new science rooms with a useful outdoor space.

"We wanted to create an ecosystem where kids could walk outside the classroom and learn so many different concepts through biology," Lang said.

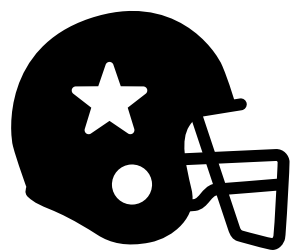
With the support of then-Superintendent Dennis Maloney, a grant was obtained and the original pond was completed in 2005 by Ron Gibbons Pools along with other donors. In subsequent years, however, the pond sadly fell into disrepair. Lang, who is retiring soon, decided to make it his goal before he leaves to see that the pond was rebuilt for the generations of students to come.

The restoration project took root when Lang and Gibbons reached out to each other a couple of years ago with similar thoughts on the pond's future. Logistics were planned, and the pool company donated their labor and the materials

over the summer, completing work at the end of August on a magnificent installation with far superior technology to the original. As in the past, the pond offers numerous applications for student science learning.

"Having a pond, it's almost endless what you can do with the biology curriculum, from balancing an ecosystem to learning about photosynthesis, respiration and how animals interact with the environment," Lang said. "My students learn how it's a very balanced and delicate system, and if you add pollution and other negative things to it, it could collapse fast. It's an artificial ecosystem, but we want it to balance naturally. It was my vision 20 years ago to have this pond, and now to see it come back again is very rewarding. It's something we can leave East Islip's students 20 years into the future."





PICTURE-PERFECT BRINGS EI TOGETHER



It was a picture-perfect homecoming for East Islip's school with a pride-filled parade. Smiling, red-clad marchers – including societies, band musicians and athletes – made their way down the street. The East Islip Fire Department, with families and neighbors lining the sidewalks, joined in the afternoon at the varsity football contest against Sayville. The game was in full energy high, firing on all cylinders and clobbering the Bulls on its feet. By halftime, the scoreboard already read 34-7. The game was getting started. During the halftime show, cheer and kick line routines that drew loud applause from the stands. Brooke Andreese was the center of delight of their classmates and friends. As the game continued, it mirrored the pride felt throughout the community, piling on the victory. For students, staff, families and alumni alike, the homecoming was a celebration of tradition, school spirit and the bonds that bring East Islip together.



T HOMECOMING IER WITH PRIDE

ool community on Sept. 27, beginning in the morning including numerous East Islip High School clubs, honor town Main Street from the Bank of America to the East the route to cheer them on. The excitement carried mithtown East. East Islip's undefeated team kept the lls with a dominant running game that had the crowd in favor of the home team, and the celebration was just line teams delivered dazzling, high-energy performances n and Sage Lyons were crowned as senior royalty, to the nued, the team's commanding performance on the field up 27 more points as they cruised to a decisive 61-21 day was about more than football – it was a celebration slip together.



CURRICULUM UPDATE



East Islip Science Teachers Lead the Way

East Islip's K-12 science department has been hard at work collaborating, refining and charting a bold new course for student learning as New York State unveils updated science standards. Guided by the theme "Better Together," teachers across all grade levels have come together to ensure students experience science in engaging, hands-on and meaningful ways.

At the elementary level, a multiyear review process concluded this summer with the adoption of Mystery Science as the district's primary curriculum resource. Teachers praised the program's kid-friendly, interactive lessons; easy-to-use kits; and flexible print-digital hybrid format.

At the secondary level, teachers are equally energized. Grade 7 teachers spent the summer updating lessons and assessments to prepare students for greater rigor and deeper reading

expectations. Biology, earth science and space science teachers are rolling out exciting new curriculum standards this year, after years of reviewing shifts, piloting sample materials and crafting East Islip-tailored lessons. Students will dive into fresh opportunities to think and act like scientists through hands-on investigations and discovery-based learning. Looking ahead, chemistry and physics teachers are just one year away from implementing new standards, with even more innovative, lab-rich experiences on the horizon.

"This multiyear collaborative effort reflects the commitment of East Islip's teachers to ensure students are fully prepared for the future of science learning," Math and Science Director John Genova said. "The energy in classrooms this fall is unmistakable – teachers collaborating, students engaging and science learning taking flight!"

Bringing the Science of Reading to Life With *Magnetic Reading*

This summer, the district embarked on a coordinated professional learning journey to launch i-Ready Magnetic Reading across all K-5 classrooms. The rollout began in June with districtwide trainings, continued through July with grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and culminated in a two-day Superintendent Conference Day experience that kickstarted the school year. Together, these sessions ensured that every teacher entered September with a clear vision for high-quality, grade-level literacy instruction and the support needed to meet diverse student needs.

Magnetic Reading is aligned with the Science of Reading, a



body of research that explains how children learn to read and what instructional practices are most effective. The program balances explicit, systematic instruction in foundational skills – such as phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency – with opportunities to build vocabulary, background knowledge and comprehension. This approach reflects East Islip's commitment to using evidence-based practices that give every

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Bringing the Science of Reading to Life With *Magnetic Reading*

Continued...

child the tools to become a confident, lifelong reader.

In June, teachers gathered for hands-on sessions introducing Magnetic Reading Foundations (K-2) and Magnetic Reading Comprehension (3-5). These trainings provided a common foundation in instructional design, lesson planning and assessment practices. Teachers explored how Magnetic Reading is structured to keep all students on grade level while also addressing individual needs. Educators left the sessions with weekly planning tools, lesson “look-fors” and strategies for scaffolding that maintain rigor while supporting growth.

The summer learning continued in July, when grade-level teams collaborated in PLCs to explore, expand and connect interdisciplinary opportunities within Magnetic Reading. These collaborative sessions focused on turning June’s training into actionable classroom plans. This 12-hour professional learning series brought together teacher representatives from each grade level to align program texts with New York State social studies practices and science standards. These plans



include differentiation strategies and support for English Language Learners, ensuring all students benefit from cross-curricular connections. The process demonstrated how East Islip educators are truly better together when planning for student success.

“For East Islip students, this rollout means consistent access to high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction,” Humanities Director Korin Scarles said. “Every K-5 child will engage with rich grade-level texts and tasks, supported by scaffolds that promote – not replace – rigorous learning.”



ANDREW MAROTTA PRESENTATIONS HELP Secondary Students Navigate Cellphone Policy

East Islip recently brought in Port Jarvis educator Andrew Marotta as part of the district’s commitment to distraction-free learning, offering his “Being a Winner, With and Without Your Cellphones” concept in a September series of seven energetic, interactive presentations at the middle and high schools. Like all New York State school districts, East Islip implemented cellphone restrictions this year. Marotta’s presentation seeks to turn this new policy into a positive,

providing inspirational ideas on how students can create great, uplifting content, as well as urging them to follow their dreams.

“My presentation is really about the positive things in your life,” he said. “When you have your phone, what are the good things that you could do? And when you don’t have your phone, how can you engage with others? How can you be present?”

East Islip Union Free School District

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Momentum at South Bay Donates Backpacks

For the fourth year in a row, the dedicated staff of Momentum at South Bay for Rehabilitation and Nursing sponsored an initiative to donate backpacks and school supplies to the district's students. Working with Momentum's Joseph Aplustille and Barbara Silhan, senior citizens from the community stuffed 125 backpacks with supplies, readying them for delivery in September.



"We sincerely thank Momentum for their generous donation of backpacks for families in need," Superintendent Paul Manzo said. "We're also grateful to the dedicated volunteers who assembled the supplies, as their kindness truly shows that it takes a village. This support helps ensure every student is ready for a successful school year, and it is deeply appreciated."

PTA Welcomes Back Staff With Breakfast

This fall, the PTA welcomed teachers and staff with a special breakfast, and exciting events have been planned for the weeks ahead, including PARP celebrations, Red Ribbon Week and the always popular Trunk or Treat at all four elementary schools.

"The PTA plays a vital role in the success of our schools and the strength of our community," PTA Council President Cheryl Pepe said. "More than fundraising, the PTA builds connections between families, educators and the community, ensuring every student has the support and resources they need to thrive."

FTK Continues Work on Behalf of Our Students

The nonprofit For the Kids Foundation recently delivered 3,000 lanyards to the Renaissance Program at the middle school, helping to support school spirit and student recognition. FTK's book vending machine program is also going strong, with each of the four elementary schools fully stocked for the first day of school.

"We're thrilled that every child will continue to receive a free book on their birthday," FTK President Cheryl Pepe said.

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

22-23 – PTA Craft Fair:
East Islip High School

DECEMBER

- 2 – EJ Autism Black Tie Hoodie Event:
Captain Bill's 7-10pm
- 3 – HS Concert #1 7:30-9:30pm
- 8 – RCK Concert – HS 6-7pm
- 9 – HS Concert #2 7:30-9:30pm
- 10 & 12 – Elementary half day,
parent teacher conferences
- 12 – HS Drama, A Christmas Carol:
7-9pm (and 13th 2-4pm)
- 15 – JFK Concert, HS 6-7pm
- 16 – MS Concert #1, HS 7-9pm
- 17 – MS Concert #2, HS 7-9pm
- 18 – MS Concert #3, HS 7-9pm
- 24-31 – Winter Recess, Schools Closed

JANUARY

- 1-2 – Winter Recess, Schools Closed
- 7 – HS Plan Your Future, Elective Fair
and AP Info Workshop, 6-9pm



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Visit our website at www.eischools.org

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