Winter 2026

EDUCATIONAL HORIZONS

Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District News

Sense of Belonging Workshop
Led by Author Cornelius Minor

The POB Equity, Inclusivity and Belonging (EIB) Committee and POB PTA sponsored the Sense of Belonging Workshop event for families to connect with Board of Education members, District administrators and fellow families. The event featured professional developer Cornelius Minor, author of *We Got This: Equity, Access, and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be,* reinforcing a shared commitment to collaboration and continuous learning.

The workshop invited participants into an active learning experience centered on connection and reflection. Through Mr. Minor's guided dialogue and hands-on activities, participants explored what it means to create a community where everyone feels valued, supported and empowered to live, learn and grow together.

Working in pairs and small groups, participants examined how differently people can observe, interpret and experience the same school environment. Creative exercises, including sculpting personal representations of what "school" means using Play-Doh, revealed a wide range of expressions such as hearts, homes and symbols of thinking and care, and reinforced the powerful message that no single experience or definition applies to everyone.

The event was the third shared learning experience of the 2025-2026 school year. In September, families and members of the community participated in programs exploring artificial intelligence. Parent University in October shared strategies for finding balance in a digital world, and the community recognized Holocaust Remembrance Night and the opening of the renovated Holocaust & Genocide Education Center at John F. Kennedy High School in January.

On March 16th, the District will join forces with districtwide PTAs, the POB Chamber of Commerce, the Mid-Island YJCC and other community members to collect supplies for children with cancer and their siblings.







College Bound!

POBJFKS Class of 2026 is proud to announce early college acceptances to:

Arizona State University
Binghamton University
College of Charleston
Cornell University
Emory University
Keiser University
Le Moyne College
Misericordia University
New York University
Northeastern University
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Quinnipiac University
St. John's University
SUNY Oswego
SUNY Purchase
Syracuse University
University at Buffalo
University of Connecticut
University of Georgia
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Pennsylvania
University of Richmond
University of Rochester
University of Tennessee-Knoxville
Wesleyan University
Yale University



Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School Students Named Coca-Cola Scholar Semifinalists

Two POBJFKHS seniors have been named semifinalists in the prestigious Coca-Cola Scholars Program. The students, Amanda Klein and Rebecca Rabinovich, are among only 1,237 semifinalists selected from more than 107,000 applicants this year for their outstanding leadership, academic achievement and dedication to their community.

Amanda and Rebecca are now in the final stage of the application process, during which 250 students will advance as finalists. From that group, 150 students will be invited as guests of honor at the 38th annual Coca-Cola Scholars Banquet in Atlanta, where they will each receive a scholarship.



SEPTA Night Out

SEPTA, the Districtwide Special Education PTA unit dedicated to supporting, strengthening and promoting awareness of special education throughout the District, recently hosted its annual SEPTA Night Out. The event brought together more than 100 Board of Education members, staff, parents and community members to celebrate Mattlin Middle School teacher Ms. Susan Ham.

Each year, SEPTA Night Out honors a staff member who has made a meaningful and lasting contribution to the special education community. This year's honoree was Ms. Ham, whose leadership has been instrumental in the successful implementation of the middle school POB Perk program, a student-run coffee shop.





Legislative Breakfast Brings District Leaders and Elected Officials Together

The Plainview-Old Bethpage Board of Education and Central Administration were honored to welcome local legislators for a Legislative Breakfast focused on collaboration and open dialogue. The discussion centered on the impact of government policies on schools and the broader community, with an emphasis on partnership and shared advocacy.

Topics included the impact of state and federal policies on school costs and timelines, effects on local homeowners, the cost of special education and the growing need for mental health supports. The conversation also addressed career pathways in mental health, the work of the District's mental health committee, proposed legislation, and effective ways for schools to support and communicate about legislative initiatives.

The District extends its appreciation to local legislators for their time, insight and continued commitment to supporting students, families and the Plainview-Old Bethpage community.

POBJFKHS Displays Internship Expansion to POB Chamber of Commerce

Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School's work-based learning coordinators, Ms. Gina Farrell and Mr. Scott Lieberman, recently presented plans to expand the School-to-Career Program to the POB Chamber of Commerce.

The program gives high school students the opportunity to earn credit by completing an internship with a local business. Students gain professional skills, contribute fresh ideas and gain firsthand insight into potential career paths.

POBJFKHS offers New York State-approved career and technical education programs in business management and entrepreneurship, business law, pre-engineering, early childhood education, and TV and video production, and plans to broaden these opportunities. In addition to internships, students complete college-level coursework, pathway-specific classes and industry-recognized assessments.



Local employers benefit from interns' enthusiasm, strong academic preparation and willingness to support staffing needs. The District is committed to strengthening partnerships between schools and the business community to help students prepare for future academic and career success.

POBJFKHS DECA Students Excel at Regional Competition





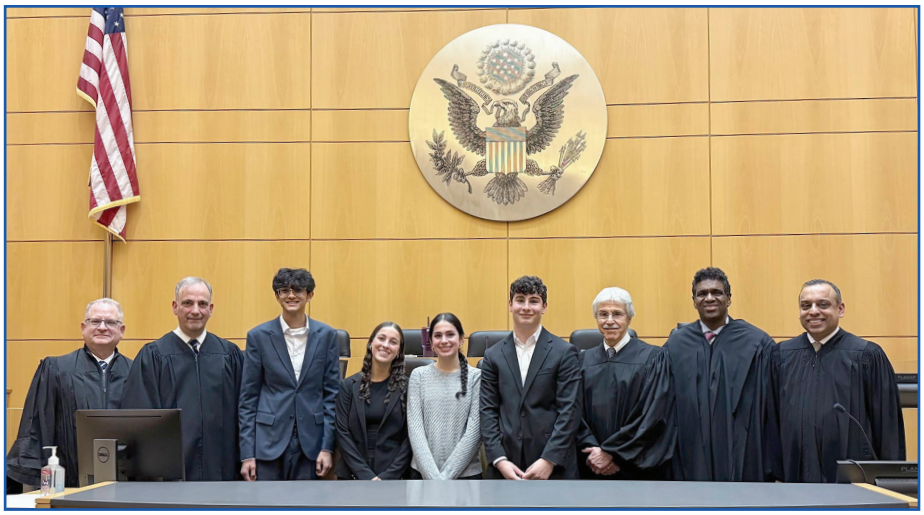
On December 18th, 147 members of the Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School DECA club competed in the Regional DECA Competition. The Regional Competition was planned and implemented by POB DECA adviser Ms. Lindsay DeLucca. Approximately 1,900 participants competed in various case study events as teams and individuals.

DECA is a global organization that prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for college and careers. POB was extremely successful at the competition, with 57 students qualifying for the NYS DECA Competition.

Congratulations to the following qualifiers:

Apparel & Accessories Marketing Series: Adam Brodzansky, Francesco Cosenza, Abigail Gilman, Alexis Wener; Automotive Services Marketing Series: Eytan Bennet, Logan Pick; Business Services Marketing: Lauren Katz, Dominic Macedonio, Jacob Marcus; Buying and Merchandising Team Decision Making: Farrah Block, Samantha Ibrahim, Alexandra Mijuca, Bryse Witkes; Entrepreneurship Series: Jake Keil, Zainab Niaz; Entrepreneurship Team Decision Making: Joseph Lacerenza, Connor Sebel; Food Marketing Series: Charlotte Leblond, Brianna Matos.

POBJFKHS Moot Court Club Wins Nassau County Championship



Members of the Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School Moot Court Club competed in the Long Island Mentor Moot Court Tournament, sponsored by the U.S. District Court in Central Islip. The event brought together 42 Nassau County teams to argue an appellate case in front of real judges using judicial precedents.

Students were assigned to two teams and argued both the student and school sides of a hypothetical dispute involving Fourth Amendment and Miranda Warning rights in public schools. They served as mock lawyers, presenting arguments and responding to questions from a panel of Nassau County and federal magistrate judges.

After four rounds of competition over two days, Plainview-Old Bethpage defeated Bethpage High School to win the Nassau County championship. The team, represented by Brady Bornstein, Lauren Katz, Ariel Klingher, Jake Melniker, Shane Menikoff, Asha Reddy, Rishi Sanghvi and Whitney Zizzo, continued to the Long Island finals. Ariel Klingher and Rishi Sanghvi represented the team in the Nassau County championship round, while Lauren Katz and Shane Menikoff competed in the Long Island final. Katz received the Best Oralist award.

Students were mentored by attorneys Giuseppe Franzella and associates from the Melville-based firm Bond, Schoeneck & King, as well as Moot Court Club advisers Ms. Nancy Rogers and Ms. Gina Farrell. The tournament provided students with an authentic courtroom experience, helping them develop legal skills, advocate for their positions and think critically under pressure.



Soon Hee Newbold Visits District Orchestra Students

Internationally renowned composer and performer Soon Hee Newbold visited the District to work with orchestra students in grades 5-12, offering a memorable and inspiring musical experience. During her visit, students rehearsed with Newbold, gained insight into her creative process and asked questions about performance and her approach to composing using classical and modern elements of music.

Newbold worked with a wide range of ensembles at the middle schools and high school, including the Thunder Hawks electronic strings ensemble and chamber ensemble. Students were especially drawn to Newbold's work in the film industry, and she encouraged them to experiment with new sounds, styles and creative approaches. She also led a professional development workshop for teachers.

A highlight of the visit was Mattlin's fifth and sixth grade orchestra performing "Legend of Dark Mountain" under Newbold's direction. She composed the piece herself, providing students with a unique and inspiring opportunity to learn directly from the composer.

The District remains committed to supporting the arts and ensuring students and staff have access to meaningful, high-quality artistic experiences that enrich learning and inspire creativity.

Alumni Visits

The POBJFKHS guidance and school counseling department, along with ninth grade health teacher Ms. Jackson, invited alumni from the Class of 2025 to speak with current members of the senior class for Alumni Day. Alumni visited to talk about their transition after high school and answer questions about college and career paths.

Continuing the spirit of alumni engagement, Sydney Jasser, a 2025 POBJFKHS graduate and a student at the University of Delaware, visited Ms. Elder's fashion classes. Ms. Jasser shared her first-semester experiences and discussed the work she has completed as a fashion and design major.





AROUND THE DISTRICT

Stratford Road Elementary School

Stratford Road's third graders wrapped up their biography unit with an incredible Wax Museum project that brought history to life. After selecting a historical figure to study, each student conducted research and created a detailed trifold to showcase their learning. On the big day, the library transformed into a living wax museum as students arrived in costume, stayed in character and shared fascinating facts, stories and accomplishments with families and staff. It was a memorable celebration of hard work, creativity and the joy of learning.



Old Bethpage Elementary School

This winter, students at OBE continued to learn, collaborate and shine in their Grow & Glow Lab, a space designed to support both the schoolwide KEYS PBIS and the Let Grow initiative. Through hands-on STEAM challenges, students practiced problem-solving, communication and adaptability while learning to take appropriate risks and work more independently. The Grow & Glow Lab encourages students to try new strategies, learn from mistakes and support one another – key principles of the Let Grow Initiative. As students build, design and reflect together, they strengthen the KEYS of Kindness, Equity, Your Best Self, and Safety, helping them grow as confident learners and caring members of our school community.





Judy Jacobs Parkway Elementary School

JJP first grade students recently participated in a collaborative experience with the Stony Brook University softball team. Student-athletes visited Judy Jacobs Parkway Elementary to lead small-group ELA lessons, followed by a collaborative winter craft activity. This experience provided our students with positive role models while reinforcing foundational literacy skills through engaging, hands-on instruction.

Pasadena Elementary School

Pasadena is proud to highlight a wonderful collaboration between POBJFK High School and Pasadena that showcased the power of learning across grade levels. Students from POBJFK's robotics team, the POBots, visited Pasadena to share their impressive robotics skills and passion for innovation. Elementary students had the exciting opportunity to engage hands on with robotics activities that encouraged problem-solving, teamwork, critical thinking and creativity, foundational skills essential to STEM learning. In addition, POBJFK High School reading interns joined the visit as they prepare for future careers in education. These interns worked closely with second grade students, fostering a love of reading while teaching new literacy strategies and skills in a supportive and engaging environment.



AROUND THE DISTRICT

Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School

Ms. Verdi's art classes at Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School explored digital and macro photography through a creative, hands-on project. Students designed miniature cityscapes using staples and everyday office supplies, then photographed their scenes using close-up techniques and creative lighting. After being inspired by a professional photography slideshow, students learned how to edit their images using professional tools, transforming their photos into polished final works. The project encouraged creativity, collaboration and fresh perspectives, with students producing impressive results.





Mattlin Middle School

Mattlin recently held its annual Career Workshop for eighth grade students. More than 25 professionals from diverse fields, including healthcare, STEM, education, law enforcement, government, business and finance, met with students as they rotated through career stations. Many students also took part in virtual career experiences using headsets provided by the Department of Labor and enjoyed exploring different careers through immersive simulations.

Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

The POBots were awarded the 2025 Community Impact Optimum Innovator Grant in recognition of their work in technology, service and leadership. Optimum representatives visited one of the team's preseason workshops to present the award, joined by New York State Senator Rhoads, who congratulated the students. This marks the second consecutive year the POBots have been recognized by Optimum; last year's honor included a $2,000 grant to support an additional FIRST competition. The team earned this year's award through their Innovator Awards application, highlighting their community outreach, technological excellence and commitment to inspiration, inclusion and sustainability.

Senior Citizens Club

The POB Senior Citizens Club eagerly meets on Friday mornings when school is in session to participate in various activities such as chair yoga, dancing to live entertainment, brain teaser/trivia games, bingo and informational lectures followed by spirited discussions. Throughout the year, seniors attend festive holiday parties and stimulating trips. In the next few months, active members will be taking two trips into New York City to attend the Bobby Darin Show and Shen Yun at Lincoln Center, as well as celebrating Saint Patrick's Day at a lively Irish pub. If you are 55 years young or older, consider joining this wonderful club.





Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District
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Faculty Awards and Recognitions

POB is proud to share the achievements of our faculty and administration.

Ms. Jennifer Fitzpatrick, POBMS teacher, has been appointed as a New York State Master Teacher. The program recognizes the exceptionally talented and experienced STEM teachers dedicated to providing the most innovative STEM education to students, committed to professional growth and sharing their practices with colleagues. Ms. Fitzpatrick joins POB master teachers Melissa Brophy, Tara Finn, Dame Forbes and Jordan Pekor in competing the four-year program.

Ms. Dorothy Drexel, POBMS assistant principal, was featured in the Fall 2025 SCOPE Journal for Leadership and Instruction for her article, "Planting the Seeds of Legacy: A Poetic Reflection on Leadership and Resilience in School Building Administration." Through a poetic lens, she reflects on leadership, resilience and the legacy of school building administration.

Ms. Kelly Verdi, POBMS art teacher, currently serves as the president of the New York State Art Teachers Association. Her article, "Art: Humanities Greatest Superpower," was featured in the 2025 Fall NYSATA newsletter.

Ms. Jodi Horowitz, Stratford Road physical education teacher, was named the 2025-2026 Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the Nassau Zone of the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

We are proud to celebrate these achievements and grateful for the talent and dedication administrators and teachers bring to their work each day.