



SEAFORD EDUCATION *Spotlight*

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Seaford Scholar Profile Is Foundation of Student Success Growing Initiative Unifies Social-Emotional Learning Programs

Now in its third year, the Seaford Scholar Profile continues to evolve and has become embedded into daily life at the district's four schools. The profile incorporates aspects of the social and emotional learning program including Growth Mindset, Habits of Mind, Innovator's Mindset, Lion's Quest and RULER.

The 10 traits are characteristics that students should develop on their journeys throughout their time in Seaford Schools to prepare them for lifelong success: **communicator, flexible, humorous, innovator, mindful, networker, principled, reflective, resilient and risk taker.**

"When you look at these traits, they are not skills students will develop overnight," said Dr. Sheena Jacob,

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Instructional Support. "They require intentional practice and reflection, and an understanding of how each trait shows up in different situations. You have to practice. You have to think about what each trait looks like in different situations."

Dr. Jacob noted that students will graduate high school and enter a world where having a growth mindset is instrumental for success. Mastering these traits will help them in the future to adapt in a fast-changing world and embrace being a lifelong learner.

A committee selected the 10 traits following a thorough analysis of existing SEL programs. The group of administrators, teachers and pupil personnel services staff continue to meet quarterly to discuss ways to enhance the visibility of the Seaford Scholars Profile in the individual schools and districtwide.

"The skills are based on 21st-century skills that students need for success in the future," Seaford High School teacher Laura Heller said.

"The purpose of the traits is for students to take these skills beyond school," teacher Alex Becker added. "When they go off into the real world, they are capable of being productive members of society by exemplifying these traits."

Seaford Scholar Profile posters were developed and hang in classrooms identifying the 10 traits as well as the behaviors that apply to each characteristic.



Faculty members on the high school Seaford Scholars committee meet to discuss ways to make the profile traits more visible around the school.

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Seaford Scholars Throughout The Schools



In learning about the trait “communicator,” Seaford Harbor Elementary School fifth graders interviewed each other about gratitude.

Seaford Middle School selected its first Seaford Scholar representatives to serve as role models for their peers. One of the primary tasks for eighth grader Mila Rogdakis and seventh grader Colin Carroll is to conduct video interviews about the Seaford Scholar Profile and showcase ways students demonstrate their 10 traits daily.

“They are the student faces and voices of the Seaford Scholar profile,” Assistant Principal Joseph Polite said. “They are helping to promote the value of this initiative and inspire their peers to embody all of the traits.”

Above the classroom doors at both the middle school and high school are large posters featuring the traits. Both schools also recognize Seaford Scholars of the month, who are nominated by faculty. The middle school displays their photos in the lobby, and the high school will soon be adding a bulletin board with all of the winners.

Branding is very important at the high school, where the Seaford Scholar traits are emblazoned on two of the staircases. A mural is also in the works.

Guidance Counselor Frank Stazzone, a member of the Seaford Scholar committee, said the goal is for

the traits and associated language to become embedded within the school culture. That is starting to happen, he noted, based on the conversations in classrooms and even among students in the hallways. Within a few years, students first introduced to the traits in elementary school will be entering their secondary years with greater understanding of the traits.

“Proud Parent of a Seaford Scholar” bumper stickers are even starting to pop up. At the elementary schools, special area teachers award bumper stickers and magnets to students who demonstrate these traits in their classes. Additionally, any student or staff member can “shout out” someone who had visibly demonstrated a trait to be recognized on a Seaford Scholar star and highlighted during the announcements.

Manor Elementary School features monthly lessons and activities focusing on the 10 traits, led by social worker Jennifer DeMieri. The new Seaford Scholar bulletin board, near the main lobby, features three mirrors and affirmation statements that students can read, such as “I am an innovator” and “I am resilient.” Principal Joann Krudis leads a call-and-response with students: “Seaford Vikings are Seaford Scholars.”

Both elementary schools honor students with Seaford Scholar keychains, a reward for students who demonstrate each trait. Manor and Harbor elementary schools are also adorned with posters that connect the 10 Seaford Scholar traits to the 16 dispositions of the Habits of Mind. All the Habits of Mind fit into a Seaford Scholar trait, like taking responsible risks is a risk-taker; managing impulsivity is being mindful and listening with understanding and empathy is being a communicator.

“Teachers intentionally incorporate the scholar traits into their curriculum,” Manor first grade teacher and

committee member Angelina Lee said. “For example, reading stamina is linked to resilience, and word-solving activities emphasize flexibility. In Mystery Science lessons, students regularly practice innovation.”

At Harbor, the Seaford Scholar board near the all-purpose room recognizes students who have been selected by their teachers for identifying the trait of the month.

Harbor Principal Jennifer Bisulca said that Seaford’s SEL programs are prominent throughout the elementary schools. Lions Quest features designated character education and antibullying lessons, while RULER has the mood meter, which is visible in every classroom. Students do daily check-ins on their emotions, sometimes even multiple times per day. The Seaford Scholars Profile unifies these initiatives, lessons and traits into a unique and innovative framework.

“Seaford Scholars is the foundation of who we are,” Ms. Bisulca said.



Seaford Middle School students Colin Carroll and Mila Rogdakis are the school’s first Seaford Scholar representatives.



Seaford Manor Elementary School first grader Benjamin Tice was recognized earlier this year for demonstrating resilience.



Habits of Mind CONFERENCE

The district is scheduled to host a Habits of Mind conference at the end of February. Seaford is partnering with the Institute for Habits of Mind and the program is open to educators from across the region. Dr. Bena Kallick, Allison Zmuda and Superintendent Dr. Adele Pecora are scheduled as the keynote speakers. The conference will feature breakout sessions, site visits to view the Habits in Mind in action at the elementary schools, classroom visits at the middle school and high school, and a student panel on the Seaford Scholar Profile.

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Art Teacher Earns Regional Award

Seaford Harbor Elementary School art teacher Christine Donnelly received the Established Educator Award from the Nassau County Art Supervisors Association. The award honors an art educator who is committed to giving back, advocates for the advancement of the arts and is active in his or her own artistic profession.



She was nominated by Coordinator of Fine and Applied Arts Dr. Patrick Kennedy. In addition to teaching, Ms. Donnelly is a member of the Art League of Long Island and is a member of its board of directors.

Dedicated to Health and Fitness



Alyssa Trentacosta and Jimmy Wu were this year's recipients of the Outstanding Physical Education Student Award, presented by the Nassau Zone of the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Two students from every high school, one male and one female,

were honored at a dinner at the New Hyde Park Inn in December. Alyssa and Jimmy were selected for this award by Seaford High School's physical education teachers. Criteria include physical education achievement and leadership, academic excellence, outstanding character and involvement in school activities.

National Merit Recognition

Three Seaford High School seniors have been recognized for their academic achievements in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship program.

Matthew Kind was named a National Merit Semifinalist, placing him within the top 1% of PSAT scorers in New York State. He is among more than 16,000 students nationwide to earn semifinalist status. About 95% of semifinalists will advance to finalist standing and will



then compete for more than 6,900 National Merit Scholarships to be awarded in the spring, totaling about \$26 million.

Emily Bauman and Brian Karaman were named National Merit Commended Students, joining about 34,000 other students nationwide who received this distinction. Although they do not continue on in the competition, Commended Students are recognized for demonstrating outstanding potential for academic success and are among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2026 competition by taking the 2024 PSAT.

Matthew is the Class of 2026 valedictorian and Brian is the salutatorian.

Science Fair Winners

Seaford Middle School's revamped science fair featured 116 seventh grade projects at an evening science fair on Dec. 4. Students worked independently or with a partner and completed experiments at home.



This year's winners were:

Red Team: First Place – John Egan (Is Your Internet Browser Scamming You?); Second Place – Kevin Whidden (Bacteria on Ice); Third Place – Keith Kern and Carlo Valerio (Food Fight: Junk Food vs. Healthy Food); Honorable Mentions – Callen Curry (Air Ball), Ava Scopinich and Angelica Malone (Hot Cups).

Blue Team: First Place – Parker Matulewicz and Samantha Kelly (Bioplastic vs. Plastics); Second Place – Logan Siegel and Michael Saracco (Popcorn Mania); Third Place – Angela O'Brien (The Great Cheese Melt); Honorable Mentions – Nicholas Guercio (Running Surface vs. Speed), Michael DeStefano (The Rusty Nail).

Saluting Seaford's Fall Champions

The varsity football team captured the Nassau County Conference IV championship with a win over Plainedge. Including playoff games, the Vikings finished with a 10-2 record in the fall 2025 season.

The varsity girls soccer team won the Nassau County Class A girls soccer championship, defeating Plainedge. It was the team's second title in the past four years.