

Bulletin Board

Middle Country Central School District

ISSUE XIV OF DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

EMPOWERING SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

At Middle Country Central School District, preparing students for life after graduation means more than meeting requirements—it means opening doors. From college-bound scholars to future skilled trades professionals, our high school students are given access to a wide range of curriculum and program opportunities designed to help them discover their strengths and build meaningful futures.

Through Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, students pursue hands-on, industry-specific training while still in high school, earning certifications, real-world experience, and eligibility for BOCES and CTE scholarships, along with many other competitive scholarship opportunities. These programs not only prepare students academically and technically, but also position them as strong, confident candidates as they take their next steps. When our graduates leave us, they are ready to succeed in college classrooms, training programs, apprenticeships, the workforce, and the military.

One shining example is our longstanding, state-of-the-art cosmetology CTE program, which continues to provide students with vocational training in a professional setting. The program reflects our belief that success looks different for every student, and that each pathway deserves equal respect and support. We are also exploring additional avenues that align with workforce needs and student interest. Fields such as drone piloting, HVAC, welding, and the building trades represent growing industries with strong career potential. District administrators are thoughtfully considering how we might expand our CTE offerings to include programs such as these, as resources allow, ensuring even more students can access high-quality, career-connected learning.

At the same time, our commitment to diverse pathways extends beyond traditional academics and vocational training. Nontraditional and specialized courses, along with programs such as LIFE, empower students to develop independence, practical life skills, and confidence in navigating the world around them. Whether a student's path leads to a community college, a university, a technical certification, direct entry into the workforce, or a blend of experiences, we strive to provide the structure and support that make those goals attainable.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on thoughtfully expanding opportunities while maintaining the excellence and competitiveness that define our District. By continuing to invest in innovative programming and exploring new career-connected pathways, we ensure that every student has multiple avenues to be successful—both before graduation and well beyond it.



DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Portrait of a Middle Country Student

The New York State Portrait of a Graduate outlines a shared vision for student success. It includes six key attributes: academically prepared, creative innovator, critical thinker, effective communicator, global citizen, and reflective and future-focused. Here in the Middle Country Central School District, our mission guides our thinking around this work. We begin in elementary school with inquiry-based activities and opportunities for civic engagement. By the time students reach high school, they have access to a diverse and ever-expanding range of electives, including career and technical education programs and college-level and Advanced Placement coursework. Throughout their educational careers, students learn to become creative problem solvers, contribute responsibly to their community, and set personal goals. Every Middle Country student is truly a Portrait of a Graduate.

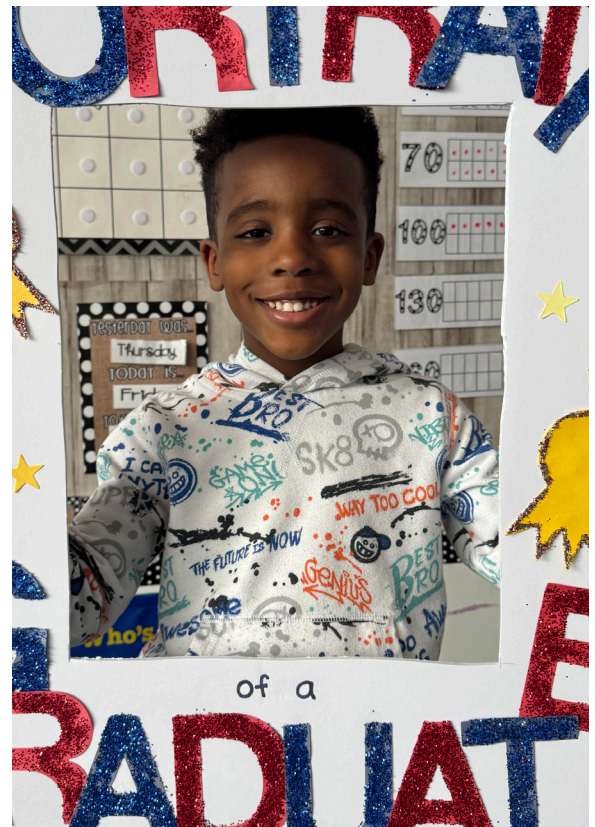
Mission Statement

The mission of the Middle Country Central School District is to empower and inspire all students to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be creative problem solvers, to achieve personal success, and to contribute responsibly in a diverse and dynamic world. Our commitment to this mission is embodied in our ongoing strategic objectives:

- Each student will continually identify personal goals, and develop and implement plans for achieving those goals.
- Each student will choose to continually contribute to the community in a responsible manner.
- Each student will identify and implement creative solutions to increasingly challenging problems within his/her world.

Middle Country students are able to enroll in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses, giving them an advantage ahead of college. The Advanced Placement (AP) program offers college-level curricula and exams to high school students, allowing them to earn college credit early. The Dual Enrollment program also enables high school students to earn college credit while building the knowledge and skills needed for their college and career aspirations. These programs can save students time and money in college and help them build confidence and get a head start on their postsecondary goals, whether they plan to attend college, pursue specialized training, or enter the workforce. The District offers 24 AP courses and 16 Dual Enrollment courses.

Additionally, the District offers accelerated math and science classes to eighth graders to enable them to enroll in AP courses when they enter 11th and 12th grades. The Algebra and Biology for All courses are designed to prepare students for more complex studies as they enter high school. Through a wide range of courses and programs, the District supports students' educational journeys and prepares them for success beyond graduation.



DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Scholarships

The District offers numerous local scholarships for Centereach and Newfield high school seniors based on academics, extracurriculars, and community service. Our students are highly competitive for external scholarships, as well, earning several million dollars in awards each year. In addition to generous support from local organizations, including community groups and the fire departments, many students also earn highly competitive scholarships from national programs. Key opportunities include the Middle Country Education Foundation's Dr. Karen J. Lessler Memorial Scholarship, the Middle Country Teachers' Association's Ingrid and Jack Wallach scholarship, and various BOCES and CTE scholarships, among many others. Students may access the 2026 Scholarship Booklet on the District website for more details.

Supporting Senior Success: From Classrooms to College or Careers

At Middle Country Central School District, we are committed to ensuring our seniors are post-secondary ready, regardless of the path they choose to follow. To support this transition, all senior-level English courses provide explicit instruction and dedicated support in narrative essay development. This curriculum is designed to help students master the art of narrative writing, enabling them to craft impactful personal statements for college admissions or professional career applications. As we move into the second semester, our ELA educators provide an additional layer of targeted support, refining these narrative skills further as students finalize scholarship applications and post-secondary plans. We are proud of the intentional work our teachers and students do together to ensure every graduate's voice is heard and their goals are realized.



"In my classroom, I take a hands-on approach to ensure seniors capitalize on every opportunity for post-secondary funding by integrating scholarship applications directly into the curriculum. To start, students use a custom worksheet I developed to track the awards for which they qualify. From there, we deconstruct essay prompts together to ensure every student fully grasps the underlying expectations."

- Ashely Sabia, teacher, Newfield High School senior-level Contemporary Issues in Literature course



"I felt encouraged to apply for scholarships where I might not have done it before without the support."

- Ryan Matthews, Newfield High School senior



"The teachers helped me find which scholarships were best for me and made sure my essay met the requirements."

- Oluchi Egbuziem, Newfield High School senior

Why enroll in AP and Dual Enrollment classes?

For recent Student of the Month senior Sreya Roy, the future is looking bright. She has the potential to earn 45 college credits by the time she graduates high school, giving her an advantage as she prepares to enter college.

Why enroll in AP and Dual Enrollment classes? For some colleges and universities, students have the option to skip prerequisites and get right to their major classes. For SUNY schools, students can earn credit for core classes. After speaking with Newfield alumni, Sreya learned that it would be beneficial to skip unneeded classes early on. She was also inspired by her sister, who earned a 5 on the AP English Literature exam and skipped the freshman core class in college, freeing her up to focus on other major classes.

Sreya reported that she plans to use these credits to display academic rigor to college admissions representatives and hopefully cut out a college semester or two to save money. The driving force of enrolling in these courses, though, was for college prep and to prepare for her major. Further, she likes being in the competitive environment of like-minded students.

DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

AP Seminar Consortium

The Middle Country Central School District AP Seminar teachers successfully hosted an AP Capstone Seminar Consortium for their students and AP Seminar students from Sachem High School North on March 3rd. Through the AP Seminar course, students develop essential research, presentation, and writing skills by exploring real-world issues of their own choosing. In addition to collaborating in groups, students learn to evaluate source credibility and compose in-depth academic papers. By mastering time management and critical thinking, AP Seminar students gain a distinct advantage, entering college fully prepared for high-level research and equipped with the curiosity to seek out accurate information.

Approximately 150 AP Seminar students from both districts collaborated to develop a deep understanding of the seven thematically-linked stimulus materials provided by the College Board for the 2026 AP Seminar Performance Task 2. These texts, which revolve around the theme of community, served as the required inspiration for students to develop their own self-selected research questions. The insights gained during the consortium will support students as they work toward completing their 2,000-word individual written argument (IWA) and multimedia presentation.

The day's program featured ice breaker activities and two sets of panelist presentations. Guest speakers—including Deborah Hempe, Middle Country Public Library Coordinator for Outreach Services; Dr. Rachel Ndembera, Middle Country Central School District Director of Science and Research; John Harris, Suffolk County Planning Department, GIS Specialist; and Middle Country Superintendent of Schools Dr. Roberta Gerold—shared diverse, stimulus-based perspectives. Through these presentations, full-group Q&A sessions, and small-group reflections, students were able to explore various lenses to strengthen their upcoming research and arguments.

AP Seminar Summary

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“AP Seminar has prepared me for college, which includes an increasing workload, new techniques for finding reliable sources, and compromising with peers on solutions. I’ve met amazing people that I would’ve otherwise never talked to if it wasn’t due to AP Seminar.”

- Adrielle DelaLlarte, Newfield High School

“AP Seminar helped me prepare for college by teaching me time management, how to write a research paper, and how to confidently present to a room full of people.”

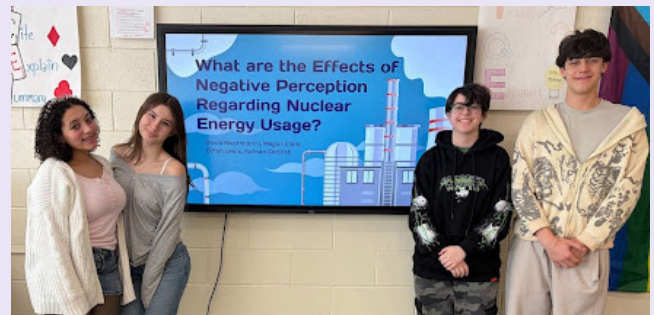
- Lindsay Marron, Centereach High School

“My speaking skills and presentation skills have highly improved.”

- Daniel Conforti Jr., Newfield High School

“AP Seminar has taught me the fundamentals of research. This class taught me to synthesize materials from various sources and collaborate with a group.”

- Angela Thomas, Centereach High School



“It allows me to refine my research skills, helps me to properly write a paper and to cite correctly.”

- Jazmine Barrientos, Newfield High School

“AP Seminar has helped to prepare me for college by making me a more confident and articulate speaker. Seminar involves collaborating with peers under deadlines to present heavily researched presentations, which is a necessary skill for college and requires mindful communication.”

- Zarif Khan, Centereach High School

DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Centereach High School Research: How Tardigrades Help Us Understand Life on Mars

Centereach High School 9th grade students Aishwarya Bhatee and Aurelio Luna are studying microscopic water bears known as tardigrades. In Ms. Nichol's science research class, Aish's interest in space and Aurelio's interest in biology led them to thinking about life on Mars. Their initial research topic was centered on how tardigrades respond to different environmental conditions with implications on our current climate conditions. Aish and Aurelio troubleshooted the next steps on their project after their tardigrades died during the February break. This led to further questions about tardigrade resiliency as studies have shown that tardigrades are able to survive for long periods of time without food or water.



"I was interested in taking the science research class because I have always been curious about science. It is my passion."

- Aurelio Luna, Centereach High School

"I'm also participating in National History Day, and I find connections between the research process."

- Aishwarya Bhatee, Centereach High School

Seal of Civic Readiness



"Providing students with opportunities to observe government in action, such as visiting the Capitol in Albany, helps them see the real-world impact of civic participation. Programs like the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness encourage students to think critically, stay informed, and take an active role in their communities. As they leave our schools, we hope they carry that sense of responsibility forward as engaged citizens and voters."

- Dawn Sharrock, Board of Education President and Chairperson of the Middle Country Legislative/Community Outreach Committee

The Middle Country Central School District is actively preparing students for the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness through authentic, research-based initiatives at both the middle and high school levels. Recently, eighth graders at Dawnwood and Selden middle schools earned credit toward the seal by presenting National History Day projects centered on the theme "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History." Some of these students, alongside peers from Centereach and Newfield high schools, will continue to refine their research for the Long Island History Day competition held at Hofstra University each March. Although we are only in the first two years of the Middle Country Seal of Civic Readiness program, last June, 446 students achieved this special recognition.

Legislative Advocacy Day at the New York State Capitol

Another essential component of the District's civic readiness program is the newly formed Student Legislative Ad Hoc Committee, which includes representatives in grades nine through twelve from both high schools. This group recently furthered their understanding of the legislative process by participating in the District's second annual Legislative Advocacy Day at the New York State Capitol. During the event, 45 students engaged in professional dialogue with state legislators regarding critical issues such as mental health and school funding. These real-world experiences allow students to demonstrate advanced research, collaboration, and public speaking skills while gaining a deeper understanding of civic engagement. The annual trip to Albany helps hone students' development of political leadership skills and teaches them how to be politically active in a productive manner. It reflects the District's emphasis on students fostering a spirit of service and showing up for the community around them.



DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Graduates Inspired by Middle Country Education

For many Middle Country graduates, the variety of opportunities provided in school led them on their paths to career successes. Their experiences sparked their passions and set them on the path to realizing their dreams.



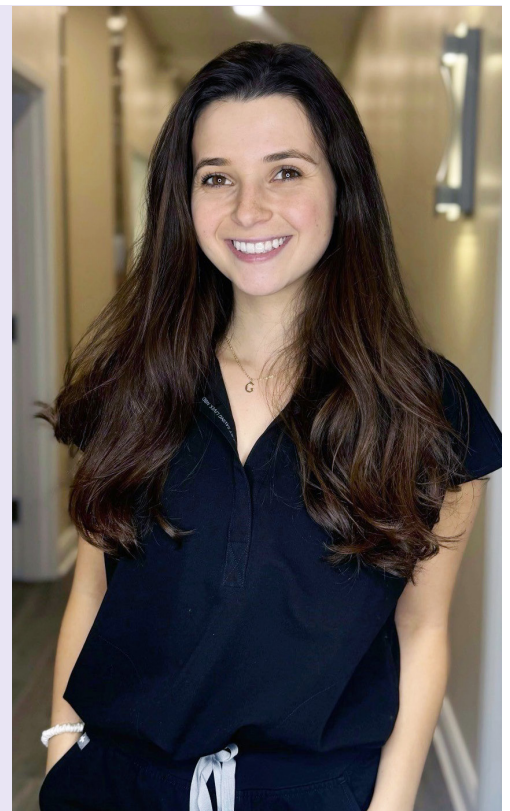
“As an alumna of both the Middle Country Central School District and Stony Brook University, I’m excited to work with students and teachers on career discovery in energy and advanced technology through workforce development initiatives. The Middle School Offshore Wind Project Showcase connects student researchers with industry, gaining vital feedback from subject-matter experts, while learning about educational pathways. My exposure to Stony Brook began as a Newfield 11th grader on a forensics field trip, and I hope our R&D Park Tour Program can inspire the next generation of energy developers, drone pilots, and Artificial Intelligence innovators.”

- Derek O’Connor, Workforce Development Manager, Office for Research & Innovation, Stony Brook University

“After graduating from Centereach High School in 2017, the University of Delaware in 2021, and the Stony Brook Physician Assistant Program in 2024, I am a nationally certified physician assistant proudly serving Long Island. I practice Medical Aesthetics at VIO Medical Spa in Patchogue and East Northport, as well as Urgent Care in East Northport and Nesconset.

My time at Centereach High School helped lay the foundation for the career I have today. Courses such as Medical Terminology and AP Biology secured my interest in healthcare early on, and the extensive selection of college credit courses kept me ahead of the curve when I arrived at the University of Delaware. Beyond the classroom, my involvement in the music program, gymnastics team, and class events taught me the importance of collaboration, compassion, and showing up for the people around me. These are values I carry with me every day while caring for patients.”

- Gabriella Pelletteri, physician assistant



DIVERSE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Northwell Health School Mental Health Partnership

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is essential to prepare all students to succeed in school and in life. The New York State Education Department describes it as the process through which children acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. With a strong foundation rooted in mental health care, students develop resiliency and are well-equipped to face any challenges they may face in the future.

In support of SEL, the District has partnered with Northwell Health to increase access to behavioral and mental health care for children and to acquire support for mental health education, training, and consultation. Northwell's Behavioral Health Centers (BHCs) provide urgent behavioral or mental health intervention for conditions that do not require the services of the emergency room. The BHCs also provide short-term crisis care and follow-up for students who need immediate services, and the care coordinator team helps support families in connecting with ongoing care and resources in the community.

To contact a representative, email RIVBH@northwell.edu or call 631-803-3104. Additionally, Northwell Health's Cohen Strong Program is a youth mental health leadership, education, and advocacy program designed for students in grades 10 through 12. The program focuses on educating students about mental health and empowering them to become peer leaders in their schools and communities. Students from Newfield and Centereach high schools recently joined the Cohen Strong program in Albany for Mental Health Matters Day, where they rallied and met with legislators to advocate for two bills in the New York State Senate that would provide funding for mental health training to students and school staff.

“Supporting students means supporting their well-being as much as their academics. Partnering with Northwell Health allows us to strengthen the support systems our students rely on every day.”

- Robert Feeney,
Board of Education Vice President

“Programs like Cohen Strong empower our students to lead with empathy, raise awareness, and advocate for meaningful change—ensuring mental health remains a priority in our schools and communities.”

- Laura Talamo,
Board of Education Trustee

Alternative Learning Center

For some students, success in school requires a different path—and the District's Alternative Learning Center (ALC) is designed to provide exactly that. The program offers a supportive, personalized learning environment for students who benefit from a nontraditional approach to education. The ALC helps students stay on track for graduation by focusing on credit recovery while maintaining the same Regents-level curriculum offered in all New York State public high schools. The program's smaller class sizes and lower teacher-to-student ratio allow educators to spend more individualized instructional time with each student, helping to strengthen academic skills and rebuild confidence in the classroom. Students can also participate in a work study program, where they submit pay stubs to verify their employment and earn elective credits after reaching set hour benchmarks.

“The Alternative Learning Center reflects our commitment to meeting students where they are and ensuring every learner has a pathway to success.”

- Doreen Feldmann,
Board of Education Trustee

Adrian Morales, a senior in the ALC program, has shown great success while working to recover credits and stay on track for graduation. Adrian has a strong interest in the field of welding and has already developed some background knowledge and skills that have motivated him to continue pursuing further education in this area. He recently received a welding scholarship to attend Suffolk County Community College.

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Athletics: The L.I.MITLESS Foundation

Newfield High School alumni Elijah Riley and Denzel Williams are dedicated to giving back in their own special way through their organization, the L.I.MITLESS Foundation. The organization’s “Whetstone” program is a curriculum that uses athletics as the primary vehicle for leadership development, blending sport, character, academics, mentorship, and community engagement into one cohesive model. Values are explicitly taught, repeatedly practiced, and ultimately expressed through leadership behaviors on and off the field. Values are the foundation, and high character community leaders are the outcome.



Elijah Riley



Denzel Williams

P.S. I Love You Day

Centereach High School proudly celebrated Kindness Week and P.S. I Love You Day for the seventh year. This event holds deep meaning, as its mission is to spread hope, raise mental health awareness, and foster a supportive community in which every individual feels welcomed and valued. Each year, we strive to amplify this message and inspire even more students to get involved.



Music: Pops Concert Celebrates Senior Scholarship Recipients

High school students took to the stage in February for unforgettable Pops concerts, showcasing the talent and dedication of the District’s performing arts program. The evening featured outstanding performances by the combined orchestras, the combined choruses, and the combined bands at both high schools. In addition to the inspiring performances, the concert served as a special opportunity to recognize this year’s Friends of Music Senior Scholarship recipients, who were collectively awarded \$10,800 in scholarships. These exceptional seniors were honored for their commitment to the music program and their contributions to the school community.

