June 2026

Plainview- Old Bethpage Central School District

GUIDANCE NEWSLETTER

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Director's Message

As we close another successful school year, I find myself reflecting not only on the accomplishments of our students, staff, and families, but also on a very personal milestone. This will be my final Notes from the Director as I prepare to retire after 38 years in education.

It has been an incredible privilege to serve this school community. Throughout the years, I have had the opportunity to watch students grow in confidence, discover their strengths, overcome challenges, and achieve goals they once thought impossible. The resilience, kindness, and determination demonstrated by our students continue to inspire me and remind me why I chose this profession.

School counseling is more than academic planning; it is about helping young people recognize their potential and believe in themselves. I am grateful to have shared so many journeys and milestones, from first-day nerves to graduation celebrations and everything in between.

I leave you with a quote that has guided me throughout my career:

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." — Eleanor Roosevelt

To our students: continue to dream boldly, work hard, be kind, and never underestimate the difference you can make in the lives of others.

Wishing everyone a summer filled with joy, rest, and new adventures. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this wonderful community. It has truly been an honor.

With gratitude,

Laurie B. Lynn, Director of Guidance



Senior Decision Day at POBJFK High School

As is tradition, our seniors gathered together to share in the joy of their post-secondary decisions. Seniors donned their college and career gear to celebrate their lives beyond POBJFK HS!



Senior Walk Celebrates Hawk Pride

Elementary and middle schools across the district welcomed back members of the graduating class for the annual Senior Walk. Wearing their caps and gowns, seniors walked through the halls where many of their school journeys began as students, while teachers, and staff cheered them on. The event was a meaningful sendoff and a wonderful display of district pride, connection, and support for the Class of 2026.









Sophomore College Tour

Mr. Jarmon, Dr. Wiley, Mrs. Rudes, and Mrs. Knight, took a group of sophomores on a college tour trip through Rhode Island and Connecticut. With stops at Johnson & Wales University, Brown University, University of Connecticut (UConn) and Quinnipiac University, students were able to gain a valuable experience being on campuses, learning more about what schools have to offer, eating in their dining halls, and getting a taste of the college admissions process! Thank you to all who participated and for making this a memorable experience!



Helping Children Handle Big Feelings

All children experience difficult emotions—anger, sadness, frustration, worry, disappointment, and stress. While these feelings can be uncomfortable, they are also a normal part of growing up. With support from parents, guardians, and educators, students can learn healthy ways to understand and manage their emotions.

Name It to Tame It
One of the first steps in managing emotions is helping children identify what they are feeling. Simple statements such as "I feel frustrated," "I'm nervous," or "I'm disappointed" can help children better understand their experience and begin to feel more in control.

Pause Before Reacting
Encourage children to take a short break when emotions feel overwhelming. A few deep breaths, a quiet moment, a short walk, or stepping away from a stressful situation can give them time to calm their body and think more clearly.

Find a Healthy Outlet
Different children respond to different tools. Some may benefit from journaling, drawing, listening to music, squeezing a stress ball, or using a calm space at home or in school. These strategies give children safe and constructive ways to work through big feelings.

Reach Out for Support
Remind children that they do not have to handle difficult emotions alone. Speaking with a trusted adult, counselor, teacher, parent, or friend can help them feel supported while also building problem-solving and communication skills.

Learning to manage emotions takes time, practice, and patience. When children are given support and simple strategies, they build resilience and confidence that will help them navigate challenges both in and out of school.

Staying Connected to Your Child's Digital World

Today's children and teens are growing up in a world where social media, group chats, gaming platforms, and online communities are a regular part of daily life. While these tools can help students connect, create, and communicate, they can also bring challenges. As parents and guardians, the goal is to stay involved without hovering and to guide children as they build healthy digital habits.

Start With Curiosity
Open conversations are one of the best ways to understand your child's online world. Ask what apps, games, or platforms they use, what they enjoy about them, and what feels stressful or uncomfortable. When children feel judged or interrogated, they may shut down. When they feel supported, they are more likely to come to you when something goes wrong.

Set Clear Expectations Together
Families benefit from having shared expectations around screen time, privacy settings, posting, messaging, and online behavior. When children are part of the conversation, they are more likely to understand the reasons behind the rules and follow them. These expectations can also change over time as children mature and demonstrate responsibility.

Monitor With Balance
It is appropriate for parents to know what their children are doing online, especially when safety is involved. Occasional check-ins, parental controls, and device settings can be helpful tools. At the same time, children also need opportunities to build trust and independence. The goal is not to read every message, but to stay aware enough to recognize concerns such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content, sleep disruption, or unhealthy screen habits.

Model Healthy Digital Habits
Children learn a great deal from what adults do. Putting phones away during meals, taking breaks from screens, speaking respectfully online, and setting boundaries around device use all send important messages.

Staying connected to your child's digital world helps them make safer, healthier choices. Most importantly, it reminds them that they have trusted adults to turn to as they navigate life online.

Making Space for Connection This Summer

Summer break offers families a valuable opportunity to slow down, reconnect, and enjoy time together outside of the usual school-year routines. At the same time, it can be easy for free time to turn into extra screen time. This summer, consider setting aside some tech-free moments each week to focus on simple, meaningful ways to connect with your child.

Get Outside Together
Take a walk, ride bikes, visit a local park, head to the beach, or explore a nature trail. Time outdoors can help everyone reset while also creating natural opportunities for conversation.

Share an Everyday Activity
Connection does not always require a big plan. Cook a meal together, run an errand, wash the car, or let your child help choose and prepare a recipe. These small moments often lead to laughter, conversation, and important life skills.

Create Something as a Team
Start a simple summer project, such as planting flowers, organizing photos, making a scrapbook, building something small, or creating a family playlist. Working toward a shared goal encourages teamwork and gives children something to feel proud of.

Bring Back Family Fun
Set aside time for a board game, card game, backyard activity, or family movie night with phones put away. These moments help children practice patience, communication, and healthy competition while enjoying time together.

Make Space for Real Conversation
Some of the best conversations happen naturally- during a car ride, before bed, while taking a walk, or sitting outside. Ask open-ended questions, listen without rushing to fix, and let your child know their thoughts and feelings matter.

The most valuable thing we can give children is our time and attention. A summer filled with simple moments and genuine connection can create memories that last long after the season ends.



Mental Health Matters: Awareness, Support, and Connection

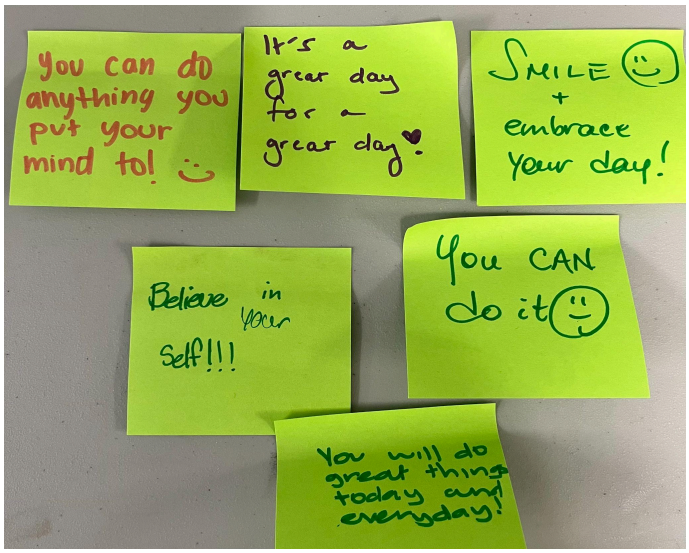
May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and POBJFK High School's support staff recognized the month through a series of activities designed to promote wellness, connection, and open conversations about mental health. Throughout the month, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and other staff members worked together to help reduce stigma and remind students that support is always available.

One of the highlights of the month was the Mental Health Awareness Fair, held on the turf. Students had the opportunity to visit tables hosted by several school groups and organizations, including the Guidance Department, Peer Mentors, and other student clubs. Activities focused on self-care, stress management, positive affirmations, healthy coping strategies, and ways students can support both themselves and one another.

Additional activities throughout the week included opportunities for students to share positive self-affirmations, learn self-management strategies, and wear green in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month.

The month served as an important reminder that mental health is a vital part of overall well-being. By creating space for conversation, connection, and support, POBJFK HS continues to encourage students to seek help when needed and to care for themselves and others.









Summer Fun Close to Home: Local Programs and Places to Explore

As summer approaches, families in the Plainview-Old Bethpage area have many local camps, programs, and recreational spaces to consider. Whether your child enjoys sports, art, outdoor play, creativity, or simply trying something new, the summer months can be a wonderful time to stay active, engaged, and connected.

Apollo 2.0
Apollo 2.0 offers a day camp experience designed for Plainview-Old Bethpage families. The program provides an inclusive, supportive, and safe environment with a variety of activities, including swimming, arts and crafts, STEAM projects, music, dance, field games, and trips. Families can visit the Apollo 2.0 website for registration information and program details.

Town of Oyster Bay Summer Recreation Program
The Town of Oyster Bay offers a summer recreation program for children that includes arts and crafts, games, themed days, water fun, scavenger hunts, and other activities. Families should visit the Town of Oyster Bay website for current dates, locations, registration information, and availability.

Mid-Island Day Camp
Mid-Island Day Camp provides a wide range of summer activities, including swimming, gymnastics, drama, STEM, arts and crafts, sports, camp carnivals, ropes activities, and more. The camp offers children opportunities to be active, socialize, and enjoy a traditional summer camp experience.

My Gym Plainview
My Gym Plainview offers camp programs with fitness games, noncompetitive gymnastics, arts and crafts, music, and movement-based activities. Programs are designed to keep children active while building confidence and having fun.

Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts
Located in Wheatley Heights, Usdan Summer Camp for the Arts offers programs in visual art, music, theater, dance, creative writing, chess, and other creative areas. This can be a great option for students who enjoy artistic expression and want to explore their interests in a camp setting.

Heckscher State Park
For families looking for outdoor activities, Heckscher State Park offers picnic areas, fields, playgrounds, paved trails, biking, walking, fishing, and access to the Great South Bay. It is a great option for day trips and family time outdoors.

Social Play Haus
Located in Plainview, Social Play Haus offers an indoor play space along with a café-style setting for families. It can be a helpful option for playdates, rainy days, or younger children who enjoy imaginative play.

Not Just Art
Located in Oyster Bay, Not Just Art offers creative enrichment opportunities in art, science, music, workshops, and mini-camps for young children. Programs are designed to encourage creativity, curiosity, and hands-on learning.

Cantiague Park
Cantiague Park in Hicksville offers a variety of family-friendly recreational options, including playgrounds, athletic courts, picnic areas, mini golf, batting cages, a pool complex, golf, and an indoor ice-skating rink. Families should check the Nassau County website for seasonal hours, fees, and availability.

When selecting a summer program or activity, consider your child's interests, age, schedule, and the type of experience you hope they will have. Registration and availability can change quickly, so families are encouraged to visit each program's website directly for the most up-to-date information.

Recommended Reading for Success: Picture Book Suggestions For Our Children

For when you want to learn about friendships, games and activities from around the world…Welcome to our Playground by Moira Butterfield

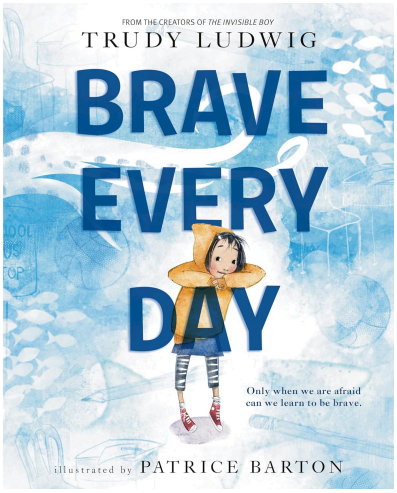
For children who are learning to navigate change…

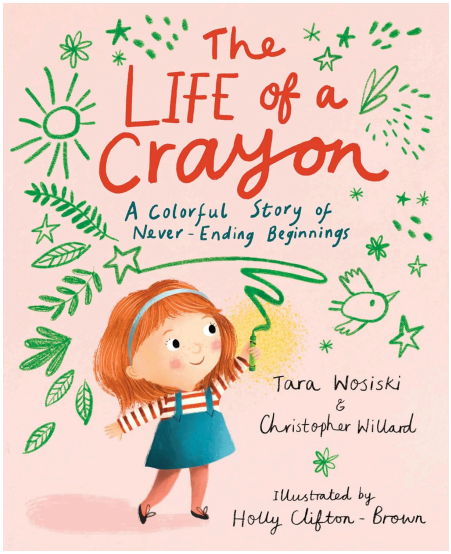
The Life of a Crayon: A Colorful Story of Never-Ending Beginnings by Christopher Willard

For children who need a reminder that being brave doesn't mean taking the biggest risks…Brave Every Day by Trudy Ludwig

For children that are making new friends and learning that making connections can happen in the most unique ways…Best Buds by Becky Scharnhorst









Starting Strong: Tips for the First Day of College Classes

The first day of college classes can feel exciting, overwhelming, and unfamiliar all at once. Whether students are beginning their first semester or returning to campus, a strong start can help set the tone for a successful semester. Here are some simple ways to feel more prepared and confident on day one.

Show Up and Be Present
It may sound obvious, but attending the first class matters. Professors often review important expectations, grading policies, assignments, attendance rules, and course routines. Missing the first day can make it harder to feel organized from the start.

Make a Positive First Impression
Students do not need to be perfect, but they should be respectful and engaged. Arriving on time, putting phones away, listening carefully, and participating appropriately can help students begin the semester on the right foot.

Choose a Good Seat
Getting to class a few minutes early allows students to find a seat where they can hear, see, focus, and participate. Sitting in a place that limits distractions can make a big difference, especially in larger lecture halls.

Review the Syllabus Before Asking Questions
The syllabus usually includes key information about assignments, grading, attendance, office hours, and classroom expectations. Students should read it carefully and save questions that are not already answered.

Wait Before Buying Every Book
Textbooks and course materials can be expensive. Students should confirm what is truly required, whether digital or used options are available, and whether the professor gives specific guidance during the first class.

Connect With Classmates
Introducing yourself to someone nearby can be helpful. Classmates can become study partners, group project members, or someone to check in with if you miss information later in the semester.

Take Notes Right Away
Even on the first day, professors may share important details that are not written clearly in the syllabus. Taking notes helps students remember expectations, deadlines, and helpful advice.

Make Sure the Class Is the Right Fit
Students should pay attention to the course expectations, professor's teaching style, workload, and whether the class fits their academic plan. If something feels off, they should speak with an advisor before making changes.

Know Where You Are Going
Students should check their schedule ahead of time, locate buildings, and know how long it takes to get from one class to another. A little planning can prevent unnecessary stress on the first day.

Come Prepared
Bring a notebook or laptop, pens, your schedule, and any materials listed in advance. Professors may begin course content right away, so students should be ready to participate and engage.

The first day is about more than just finding the classroom. It is a chance to get organized, understand expectations, and begin building the habits that lead to a successful semester.

A Legacy of Leadership, Compassion, and Service

As we prepare to say farewell to our Director of Guidance, Laurie Lynn, we pause to celebrate not only a remarkable career but also the immeasurable impact one person can have on an entire school community.

Behind every schedule adjustment, college acceptance, student success story, and family conversation was a leader who approached each day with dedication, wisdom, and heart. While students and families often saw the guidance provided, those of us working alongside them witnessed the countless quiet moments of encouragement, collaboration, and unwavering support that made our department stronger.

This special edition is a collection of memories, gratitude, and well wishes from colleagues whose lives have been enriched by her leadership and friendship. We hope these thoughts reflect just a small portion of the appreciation felt throughout our school community.

Laurie: Thank you for your years of service, your compassion, and the legacy you leave behind. We wish you every happiness as you begin your next chapter.

From Your POB JFK Guidance Family…

"Best wishes to Ms. Lynn on her retirement....may the most you desire in retirement be the least you accomplish." –Joe Izzo

“One of Laurie's very first responsibilities was hiring a new counselor, and I was fortunate enough to be that person. I have immense gratitude for her mentorship and guidance; she has been instrumental in shaping my growth from a new counselor into a more seasoned one. Her unwavering support and leadership have left a lasting impact on both my career and my life.” #Everythingisawesome –Sara Egosi

“Laurie, Thank you for seeing my potential and helping me grow. You changed my life in giving me the opportunity and privilege of working with you and this department. Have a blast in this next phase... You deserve it…” –Andrea Luzzi

“Dear Laurie - Can't imagine coming to work and not seeing you at your desk bright and early. You are proof that hard work, wisdom, and a Grande Dark Roast coffee order with Nonfat Milk plus Stevia from Starbucks can solve almost anything. Cheers to a decorated tenure at POB and to the next adventure!” –Dan Jarmon

“Laurie- Thank you for taking a chance on me and giving me the opportunity to join the counseling department two years ago. I have truly enjoyed working with you and learning from your leadership, and I only wish we had more time to work together. Congratulations on your retirement- I wish you all the happiness, relaxation, and new adventures this next chapter brings.” –Alyssa Reyer

“Thank you for leading our counseling team with such grace, wisdom, and unmatched dedication. You have been an incredible chairperson, mentor, and advocate for both students and staff. Thank you for grounding me when needed and being a friend when that was needed as well. Wishing you a retirement as beautiful and rewarding as the legacy you leave behind!” –Irene Petrosoric

“Congratulations, Laurie! While this is definitely a bittersweet moment, I am so excited for all of the new adventures that await you! There is so much to look forward to in this next chapter of your life, and although you will be greatly missed, your impact on all of us will remain. Thank you for creating such an amazing department and for fostering a culture of support, collaboration, and kindness. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such wonderful colleagues who have become a second family! Wishing you happiness, relaxation, and endless new memories in retirement. Congratulations and best wishes on this well-deserved next chapter!”
–Danielle Goodwin

A Legacy of Leadership, Compassion, and Service (cont'd)

"Dear Laurie – Wishing you a lifetime filled with happiness, fulfillment, and endless new adventures as you begin this exciting chapter called retirement. May your days be filled with beautiful sunrises, unforgettable travels, cherished moments with family and friends, and all the joy that comes from having the time to enjoy the things you love most. May the sand between your toes be the greatest inconvenience you encounter. You have earned this time for relaxation, exploration, and well-deserved celebration. Here's to long walks on the beach, carefree mornings, and a future filled with laughter, good health, and wonderful memories. May your happiness linger long after the final school bell has rung." –Jessica Baker

"You are an unbelievable leader, and we will miss you more than you know! Thank you for pushing us to be our best selves, for understanding us whenever we needed you, and for always having the answers to the most difficult situations. ❤️" –Cathryn Riley

"Laurie, thank you for always believing in us, supporting our ideas, and leading with what was best for students while never losing sight of the people around you. You have made a lasting impact on so many lives, and while you will be deeply missed, I am excited to see what this next chapter brings for you." –Stephanie Ralton

From Superstorm Sandy to becoming a husband, father, and counselor, you've been there through so many of life's milestones. Thank you for everything, Laurie—you will always hold a special place in my heart. - Dom DiDomenico

"Dear Laurie - Thank you for being a friend. Traveled down the road and back again. Your heart is true, you're a pal and a confidant." –David Goldberg

"Laurie - For someone who is rarely at a loss for words, I find myself struggling to find the right ones here. You took a chance on me many years ago, believing in me before I fully believed in myself, and I will always be grateful for your trust and confidence.Thank you for opening the door to school counseling for me and for being such a steadfast leader and incredible advocate throughout the years. While I am so happy for you as you begin this fantastic next chapter, it is impossible to imagine our department without you. You will be missed more than words can adequately express. With heartfelt gratitude and love." –Cristina Rivas-Laline

"Thank you Laurie for all your years of leadership and assistance in guiding our department. Wishing you all the best as you begin your retirement. May this new chapter bring you happiness, good health, and the opportunity to enjoy the things that matter most to you. Best wishes for a rewarding and fulfilling retirement."–Jennifer Siegel

"Laurie, thank you for your leadership, kindness, and unwavering support over the years. Your impact on our students, staff, and school community will be felt for years to come. Wishing you a retirement filled with joy, adventure, and all the happiness you deserve!"
–Barbara Rusnack

"LL- From when I was a little intern 7 years ago to now as a tenured elementary counselor, thank you for being with me every step of the way. Thank you for taking a chance on me and for seeing me through hard days and great ones. You never stopped believing in me and together we have changed countless little lives. Enjoy every second of your well-earned retirement! I am going to miss you so, so sooo much!!"
–Nicolette Lodato

"Dear Laurie – Your calm, reassuring presence has shaped not only my career but the way I support my students every day. Wishing you a retirement filled with happiness, relaxation, and all the joy you have given to others. With love and gratitude."
–Laura Ok

"Thank you for your constant support, kindness, and guidance you have selflessly shown and given throughout your years at POB. You have always led with empathy, which has been so comforting, particularly during times of challenge. You leave a lasting impact which will be remembered forever. Best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement. Xoxo"
–Valerie Zaffers

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