

The STANDARD

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CONNECTING TO THE World of Technology

Using software and programs to enhance the learning process, enhanced by focused assistance by instructional technology coach Chris Kauter, the district continues to move technology in the classrooms further into the 21st century.

“We have totally upped our ante on what instructional technology looks like in the classroom, keeping it meaningful, efficient and as stress-free as possible,” said Kimberly Skillen, district administrator for secondary curriculum and instruction.

Last year, with funding from a \$5,000 STLE teacher effectiveness grant, Kauter’s leadership came to the forefront in his position as a part-time instructional technology coach. He was so successful in helping teachers integrate technology in their classrooms in a meaningful way, that despite the conclusion of the grant, the Board and administration decided to expand Kauter’s role to full-time K-12 instructional technology coach. He meets with teams of teachers, conducting professional development and helping them create projects for their students’ benefit.

“Teachers come to him and say, ‘I have this idea,’ and Chris helps them figure out how to implement that idea in a way that is meaningful and alleviates their stress about some of the technologies,” said Skillen.

In addition to teachers, Kauter has been working with administrators and guidance counselors to develop systems that help the district track students in a more efficient way and allow staff to share information. His methodology provides substantive enhancements, going beyond delivering professional development to the teachers. Kauter will visit classrooms and shadow the teachers, troubleshooting and working side by side with them to ensure that the technology is working successfully. After a few times, he can walk away, and the

teacher is now confident to do it on their own.

“A lot of our teachers are excellent instructors, but technology isn’t always something they feel very comfortable with and they may sometimes shy away from integrating a project on their own,” said Skillen. “Now they are able to work with Chris to make it happen – he’s been their support. It’s been a great initiative and we are seeing excellent results.”

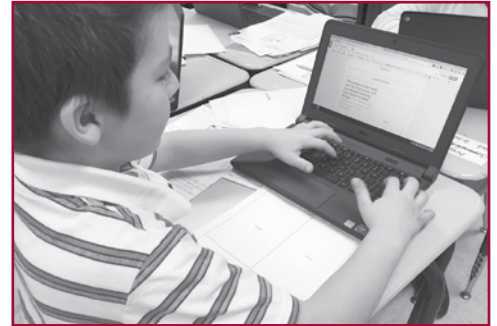
One of the major technology projects overseen by Kauter involved John Heeg, a social studies teacher at the middle school. To facilitate his classroom’s Socratic seminar, they used Google Apps for Education and a program called Doctopus to individualize groups.

“I loved this project because we are using technology as the vehicle, but it’s not the destination,” said Kauter. “The destination is a discussion, which is high-level thinking, critically analyzing and using research, so the kids can feel confident backing up their claims.”

For his innovative work on the initiative, Heeg was recently honored with the Bright Light Award from Suffolk ASSET.

Another important tech project, also at Robert Frost, focused on students building websites in teacher Scott Surdi’s classroom. Kauter and Surdi used a Google add-on program called SiteMaestro to distribute individualized, shared Google sites to the students, choosing from four different predesigned templates.

Kauter assisted another Frost teacher, Seth Margolin, to digitize applications for the National Junior Honor Society using Google Forms. Switching from the old paper version to a predesigned template, students now can submit all their information via Google Drive, with the data prepopulating into the template. This



makes it easier for the NJHS Committee to review each application, and emails are automatically sent to each of the club advisers to verify the information provided by the students.

At JFK, Kauter helped teachers Angela Giannotti and Melissa Price to utilize Chromebooks with assistive technology for fourth-grade special education students. In prior years, these students had created picture books by picking a topic, researching it, finding accompanying pictures and then constructing an actual physical book using predesigned sketchboard templates to indicate layout. Kauter took their existing templates and recreated them on Google Drive, enabling the students to make a digital storybook by dragging and dropping text and pictures.

“The kids were really motivated and excited about it,” said Danielle Sheridan, district administrator for elementary curriculum and instruction. “The integration of technology in elementary research projects brings the work to a new level, and it helps the students feel sophisticated about the work they are doing and connected to the world of technology.”

It comes as no surprise why the district has appointed its powerhouse, Chris Kauter, as the new district administrator for IT.

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BOND UPDATE: Phase I

With the approval of the capital improvement bond referendum on Oct. 20, the district is working on the next phase with its architect to carefully plan the construction projects over the next two years. Phase I is currently pending approval by the New York State Education Department and is expected to begin in late June, with an anticipated completion date of early September 2016.

At the high school, projects expected to be completed under Phase I include construction of a security vestibule and replacement of seating in the choral room, as well as enhancements to locker room security. At Robert Frost Middle School, corridor lockers will be replaced and asbestos abatement will be performed. At the primary schools, upgrades will be made to the library at JFK, while parking lot reconstruction and roof replacement will take place at May Moore and JQA.

Another project included in Phase I is a new artificial turf field at the high school, which is scheduled to be completed over the summer. The artificial turf field will include striping for soccer, lacrosse and football. Our students, athletes and community residents will have the ability to use the field year-round, allowing for greater use of the field. The new artificial turf will also provide a safe, consistent playing surface for our athletes.

"We are very excited to begin this work, which will improve our facilities and begin to transform our buildings and grounds," said Superintendent of Schools Eva J. Demyen. "We spent the last year researching, planning and preparing for these projects."

As construction progresses, the district will adjust the schedules accordingly to limit any distractions to the learning environment. Phase II is expected to commence in the summer of 2017. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the buildings and grounds department at 631-274-4080.

HS Tech Courses Expanded

New technology courses at the high school are serving to take college and career readiness to a new level, providing cutting-edge skills that can lead to valuable jobs in various trades.

This revitalization of tech offerings includes the return of the metals class, taught by newcomer Jeremy Ferrara, necessitating a redesigned classroom so that the metal shop can function to its fullest potential. In his plans for expansion, Jachan Watkis, the district's new curriculum associate for science and technology, brought in Ferrara. "He came in with a passion for and sense of technology education beyond traditional pathways, putting computer software into practical use," said Watkis.

Metals I is an introductory course in metalworking, including concepts such as sheet metal layouts, sheet metal designs, sheet metal forming, basic machining, measuring techniques, spot welding, metal joining procedures, metal properties and metal separating procedures. It also includes identification of materials, the operation and role of tools, important safety practices, and an exploration of careers in metalworking.

"It's a project-based course in which students design, engineer and construct projects with emphasis on the subjects of math, science and technology," said Ferrara, who also teaches robotics, CAD and World of Technology. "Students should leave this class feeling confident in entry-level sheet metal fabrication. The ultimate goal is to build self-confidence, self-sufficiency and accountability, which



will prepare students for their post-high school lives."

Elsewhere in tech, the World of Technology course is being offered as early as eighth grade, giving Frost students a chance to take an advanced course for technology credit.

Looking ahead, Watkis is pursuing Career and Technical Education endorsement for a planned home improvement course, which will be proposed for 2016-2017. The program would include both wood production and an electronics and electricity class, with a focus on wiring. Students would build a structure from the ground up, including framing, siding, windows, wiring, and the basic principles of plumbing and heating. Watkis hails the long vision of CTE, noting that it provides many different career opportunities close to home.

"We want to support Deer Park, a world-class community, by providing students who are skilled in trades," said Watkis. "We are building the courses we need at the high school, and we have the talent and community support."



In the past, English as a New Language – formerly known as ESL, or English as a Second Language – consisted of stand-alone programs, with a segregated population and specialized ESL curriculum. New York State's revised regulations have ushered in a new research-based ENL format, featuring collaborative teacher teams offering integrated instructional services to an integrated student population, for a curriculum that combines content

ENL Support Strengthened

and language. To meet these new mandates, the district hired six new ENL teachers, one for each building and one traveling teacher split between the high school and middle school.

Several ENL support programs are now in place for students and their families, including Parent Academy nights, held several times a year at JQA and May Moore. Each Parent Academy meeting highlights specific instructional supports geared to

School News



DEDICATED MUSICIANS PERFORM AT ALL-STATE CONCERTS

A trio of terrific high school student-musicians recently performed at All-State concerts held in December at the Eastman Theater in Rochester, New York, as part of the New York State School Music Association's 80th annual Winter Conference. Joseph DeNoyor and Alec Winters were selected by NYSSMA for the All-State Mixed Chorus, while Calvin Guyer was chosen for the All-State Symphony Orchestra. The three musicians spent many hours rehearsing for the prestigious event, where they had opportunities to tour the Winter Conference's convention center and meet other stellar musicians from across the state.

FORTY-NINE NEW ROLE MODELS INDUCTED INTO NHS

At the high school's 54th annual National Honor Society induction ceremony, 49 juniors and seniors were recognized for their accomplishments and efforts that earned them membership in this prestigious organization.

After a short musical performance by the Deer Park High School String Quartet,

the society's officers – President Peter Demopoulos, Vice President Nicholas DiModica, Secretary Calvin Guyer and Treasurer Jasmine Perez – led the new inductees into the auditorium, followed by the current members. National Honor Society adviser Seth Margolin offered a welcome to the students and their parents, followed by remarks from Demopoulos, Principal James Cummings and Associate Principal Brian Norton.

The NHS officers then spoke, each describing the qualities that serve as the standards for all National Honor Society members, which are demonstrated through each new inductee. Following the reading of the NHS pledge, the new members were sworn in with a candle-lighting ceremony.



FLAG FOR FRANCE SHOWS JFK SUPPORT

To show their support for the people of France, thoughtful student government members at John F. Kennedy created a French flag poster to be mailed to the head of the Ecole d'Etroussat school in France to share with her students. Signed by all of JFK's students, the poster was accompanied by a letter written by the two dozen student council members, all fourth-graders. The



idea for the flag gift sprang from art teachers Joanne Bibow-Buck and Laurie Schwartz, who directed the project with the help of student council leader Deborah Smith.

SEWING WITH SYMPATHY AT ROBERT FROST

Generous students in the Fashion Club at Robert Frost are sharing their time and talents to construct items for less fortunate children and adults. In a recent community service project, the club's sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders sewed cloth bags, to be used to hold cloth dolls and accessories for the Giving Doll organization. Providing joy, hope and comfort, the handmade dolls are given to children who are hospitalized or ill, or who face a life trauma such as a parent being deployed in the military, an ill sibling or a fire in their home. The Fashion Club students also made and donated 125 knitted and crocheted squares to the Warm Up America organization, to be used to make afghan blankets for the needy.



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Scholar/Athlete Teams Honored



The district honored eight outstanding high school sports teams and three undefeated middle school teams at the fall athletic awards ceremony, held at the high school auditorium during the December Board of Education meeting. As their proud family members cheered, the recognized student-athletes were presented with certificates by Athletic Director Dominick Fontana and Superintendent Eva J. Demyen.

All eight of the high school's teams – boys cross-country, kickline, boys varsity soccer, girls

varsity soccer, girls swimming and diving, varsity football, varsity girls tennis and varsity volleyball – earned Scholar/Athlete team status, recognizing their successful commitment to both athletics and academics. Teams given this honor by NYSPHSAA are required to have five players or more and earn a cumulative team GPA of 90 percent or higher.

Also honored were three Robert Frost Middle School teams – girls soccer, boys soccer and football – that finished the season undefeated.

Upcoming Budget Work Session/ Open Meetings

Feb. 23 – 8 p.m.
(Intro to Budget)

March 8 – 7:30 p.m.

March 15 – 7:30 p.m.

March 22 – 8 p.m.

April 5 – 7:30 p.m.

April 12 – 7:30 p.m.
(if necessary)

April 19 – 8 p.m.*
(Adopt Budget)

May 10 – 7:30 p.m.
(Public Hearing)

All meetings at District
Office except * at HS

TILLES TALK: *A Regent Visits PEN Society*

The high school's PEN Society recently welcomed Roger Tilles, a member of the New York State Board of Regents, to speak. During the in-depth discussion, held in the school library in December, Tilles answered student questions and touched on numerous relevant subjects, including the Common Core, Gov. Cuomo, charter schools, special education, career programs and BOCES.

The PEN Society, guided by adviser Teresa Greco, is a student-governed book club dedicated to improving the school's curriculum and creating an environment that supports a love of reading and discussion. PEN's other goals include monthly modern issues debates



and participating in community service opportunities.

"We were very honored that Regent Tilles agreed to speak with the PEN Society students about the current state of education in New York," said Christine DiProperzio, Deer Park's curriculum associate for ELA, reading and library in grades 6-12. "The students did an amazing job in preparing questions relevant to their own education and how the state's policies will impact it in the future."