

The STANDARD

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

REBUILT MARCHING FALCONS PROGRAM



Flies High



Deer Park High School's storied marching band program is on the rise, rebuilt to new heights. The Marching Falcons have a long tradition of competitive excellence and enthusiasm, but the program had diminished in recent eras. Now, guided by current Band Director Derek Schmelter and boasting 45 student participants, the band is poised for bigger and better things. Recent successes include participation in the Huntington New York State Field Band Conference Competition and Newsday Marching Band Festival.

The seeds for the band's reinvigoration were sown when Schmelter was hired in 2020, and the marching band came up in discussions with District Administrator of Fine and Performing Arts Bradley Murphy.

"At that time, the marching band was a mandatory part of the band program, meaning if students were enrolled in band, they were required to participate in marching band," Schmelter explained. "Brad and I decided that making it a volunteer program would give students the agency to choose whether or not to participate. Additionally, this opened up the opportunity to have after-school rehearsals, which has allowed us to improve the quality of our performance. In 2020-2021, we had a small number of students who participated both virtually and in person, but as we moved into the 2021-2022 school year, we nearly doubled in size. We had our first performance in a number of years as a voluntary co-curricular program and it went really well. Students saw the potential in the program,

and we doubled in size again, going into this year. After our first summer band camp in a decade, we were set to perform in our normal halftime capacity, and were able to schedule outside performances.

"My primary goal for the band is for students to have a space to perform for and support the community of Deer Park, at football and basketball games, both as a pep band and marching ensemble, and marching in parades," Schmelter said.

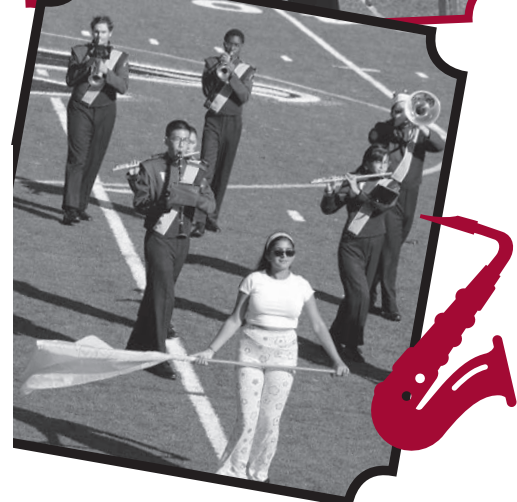
Schmelter, who has been involved in the marching arts for over 15 years as a participant, designer and instructor, is keenly aware of how much value the Marching Falcons bring to a school like Deer Park.

"A marching band helps develop a sense of pride and school spirit," he said. "I feel that performing at school and community events gets everyone excited. We all listen to music in our daily lives, and I think that having a live ensemble enhances the joint experience."

For the students, being in marching band brings multiple and diverse benefits.

"I love being in marching band because it allows me to meet so many new people and gives me new experiences that I would have never experienced before," junior Hannah Ferguson said.

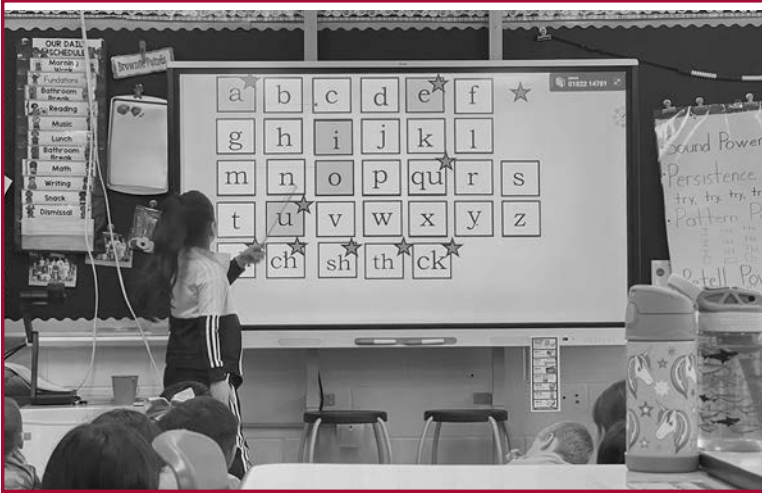
"The best part of being in the band has to be the people," senior Anthony Bruno said. "From the director and assistant directors to the seniors and underclassmen, the band becomes your second family. When you join a marching band, the experiences you have, and the friendships you make, they'll stay with you for life."



NEW Smartboards Installed

ACROSS THE DISTRICT

A project over a year in the making culminated in August 2022, when the Deer Park Instructional Technology Department, led by District Administrator Jay Murphy, embarked upon an ambitious plan to install 270 new Smartboards within all of the classrooms across the district. These new, large-screen, touch-interactive displays were installed along with a new computer with advanced features to power each board. In addition, each classroom was provided a new document camera to enable enhanced, up-close instruction in various situations. Multiple levels of professional development have been and will continue to be provided to the staff to further enhance their abilities with all the instructional possibilities the new technology provides. All of these technological additions are welcome updates and will provide many years of quality service to our students and staff.



New HS Electives Focus on

Long Island History and Geography

Two new electives at Deer Park High School – Long Island History, a social studies course taught by Joseph Alo, and Natural History of Long Island, a science course taught by Kevin Richards – have turned attention on Long Island itself.

In Richards' class, students learn about the geology and ecology of Long Island, exploring topics such as how glaciers impacted Long Island; the various ecosystems on Long Island, like the Hempstead Plains; and how climate change can affect Long Islanders. Students participate in various lab activities to better understand these topics and attend field trips to explore some of Long Island's amazing natural environments.

"The course was created to not only educate students about where they

live, but hopefully instill a greater appreciation for the place we all call home," Richards said.

Alo's class explores Long Island history from its geological origins to the present day. Analyzing the island both as a distinct region and as a case study in the broader history of America, students examine the impact of the ethnic, cultural, political, social and religious diversity that developed over time and gave the island its identity, and participate in field trips exploring Long Island's culture and history.

"Long Island holds a rich and storied history that is often overlooked in the grand scheme of the study of history," Alo said. "As Long Islanders, it is important to understand the events and concepts that got us to where we

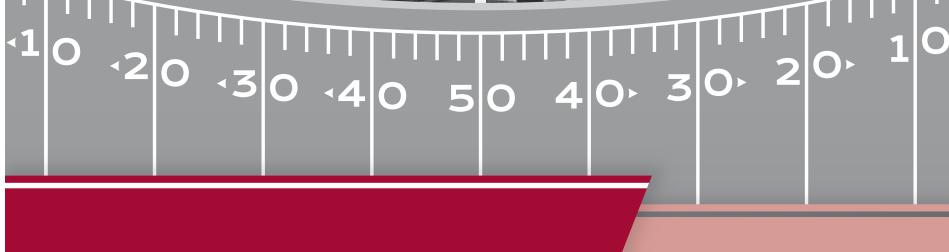


are today. This is history and culture that directly impacts us, rather than reading about distant civilizations. For the first time at Deer Park High School, a course on Long Island history is being offered for students to better understand who we are as Long Islanders. I am honored to be teaching it in its inaugural year."



Deer Park Rallies for Fantastic Homecoming Celebration

The Deer Park community rallied on Oct. 15 for a fantastic homecoming celebration. Proudly wearing maroon and white, the district's students, staff and families joined the morning parade, led by the Deer Park High School Falcons Marching Band, that began at John F. Kennedy Intermediate School and ended at Al Centamore Football Field. Each high school grade level worked hard to create memorable TV show-themed floats for the parade. Prior to the big afternoon game, Samuel Adolphe and Theresa Tiernan were crowned as homecoming king and queen, and the senior class was announced as the winner of the float and Spirit Week contests. Continuing the positive energy, the varsity Falcons football squad delivered with a rousing 27-19 victory over Hauppauge, highlighted by stellar performances by the Lovinsky brothers, Hayden and Hunter.



May Moore Rededicates Beloved Garden

May Moore held a rededication ceremony for the Mrs. Densing Memorial Garden on Oct. 20. The garden was originally created in memory of teacher Kathy Densing. Its vibrant mural, recently updated by local artist Ron Becker, depicts the view from Mrs. Densing's home in Maine. The garden redesign features a chalkboard so that teachers can take their classes outside to read and write while enjoying nature.

"We envision our garden as an extension of our school building, another location for students to learn, read, write and play, which we think is an appropriate way to honor Mrs. Densing and her memory," Principal Tammy Alcalde said.



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Putting Safety First

Safety continues to be a top priority at each of Deer Park's five school buildings.

JQA and May Moore are both in the process of purchasing raised fences, for the JQA front border and May Moore recess side gate, respectively. Both primary schools also installed new 4k cameras outside, labeled emergency doors to limit door access, and are practicing various emergency drills and tabletop exercises with students. In addition, JQA has limited door access points to two entrances and exits.

JFK has implemented extra security measures this year to ensure the safety of students at any time throughout the school day, limiting access points in the building. Staff members all have swipe cards and are only permitted to enter and exit through designated doors. The school has also limited the use of doors during recess. JFK also added an additional security guard this year, allowing the school to always have a security guard during recess to monitor the perimeter of the property while students are outside. The extra security guard allows JFK to do continuous door checks to make sure all doors are locked and closed. With the help of the district, the school will be installing fences at crucial points of the property, to secure the playground area as well as limit foot traffic from Deer Park Avenue to cut across school property. Recent assemblies taught

students the importance of stranger danger, reinforced by teachers in their classrooms.

Robert Frost has consistently stayed up to date with security protocols and procedures. Each year, the Building Safety Committee meets to assess the current state of the building and surrounding property, and make adjustments if needed. Frost continues to have a single point of entry through its security vestibule, and will be adding more cameras to maintain coverage of the external and internal areas of the building. Over the past few years, Frost has worked closely with the district security team and the Suffolk County Police Department to ensure emergency drills and preparation continue to be above par.

For this school year, the high school has made many significant changes to the ways that students, staff and visitors enter and exit the campus and building. Parking lots for students and staff have been modified so that students are parked in a more central location. Also, exterior door access has been modified to limit the amount of entry and exit points throughout the school day. Additionally, the high school has continually upgraded many of the security cameras throughout the interior and exterior of the building. As the year unfolds, the school will continue to evaluate and update safety protocols that affect students and staff.

DEER PARK WELCOMES *Full-Time Athletic Trainer*

Dan Stevens has served as Deer Park's athletic trainer for the past four years as part of his responsibilities as a Performax PT employee. This year, the district made the decision to hire Stevens as a full-time, district-employed, on-site trainer.

"We felt that the move from part-time to full-time status would be an enormous benefit to not only our athletes, but also to the entire district," said Dominick Fontana, Deer Park's administrator for athletics, physical education, health and recreation. "Dan has been a tremendous asset to the athletic department since he arrived four years ago, and even more so in the past couple of months."

