

# The STANDARD

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Defining Digital Citizenship

Complementing the other initiatives in curriculum and technology is an emphasis on digital citizenship, in which the tech department partnered with district administrators in business, health and English language arts to roll out a digital citizenship curriculum that will be seamlessly embedded in everyday instruction.

The initiative is being spearheaded at JFK and Robert Frost. At the middle school level, health and business classes are using Google-created program Be Internet Awesome. Utilizing the interactive Pear Deck platform, educators regularly engage students in sessions on how to be responsible technology citizens and become aware of the possible pitfalls of various social media platforms.

**Be Internet Awesome.** “As educators, we want to make sure they are respectful citizens,” said Jeanne Kozlowsky, district administrator for secondary curriculum and instruction. “They are learning how their digital footprint as middle school students can have implications down the road as young adults.”

“At JFK, we are focusing on integrating technology in ways that support our students in using technology responsibly and effectively in both their personal and academic lives,” said Danielle Sheridan, district administrator for elementary curriculum and instruction. “Students also practice positive digital citizenship in their weekly digital literacy class through project-based learning.”



## Using Technology to Strategize for Success With Blended Learning

Back in June, the Smart Schools project was approved by New York State, pending for close to 18 months at the state level. The project provided a chance for the district to update its entire infrastructure on the back end. All of the switches and access points – the technology “guts” of the district – are in the process of being replaced, scheduled for completion in November along with an upgrade of the district phone system to a new Cisco voice over IP system. Additionally, financial resources in the current school year budget were allocated to provide all students in grades 5, 6 and 7 with Chromebooks – for use both in school and out – this fall, once the infrastructure upgrade is completed.

“Improving the infrastructure will allow us to enhance instruction in the classroom,” said Christopher Kauter, the district’s instructional technology administrator. “This is going to allow us to move forward with many of our exciting technology initiatives and will help us to reach our 21st-century learning objectives.”

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## Superintendent's Conference Day Examines Active Shooter Incidents and Sexual Harassment

At this September's Superintendent's Conference Day assembly for staff, the district focused on two important issues that are both timely and impact safety in the schools.

Detective Clifford Lent of the Suffolk County Police Department's Homeland Security and Criminal Intelligence Bureau began the event by sharing data and statistics on active shooter incidents. He relayed a collection of best practices from schools and law enforcement agencies from across the country, including studies conducted by the FBI and NYPD that looked at over 220 active shooter incidents in the United States from 2000 to 2016.

Lent explained what an active shooter is and what the numerous variables are, such as the attacker's proximity and choice of weapons. He advised educators on how to react

quicker than they normally would; to know what the communication plans are in the workplace and how to initiate emergency protocols; where to run to exit the facility or take shelter; and to be aware of the effects of shock and how to overcome them.

Next up was a presentation on sexual harassment in the public-school setting by attorney Joseph Lilly of the firm Frazer & Feldman, Garden City, New York. Sexual harassment can involve adults and/or children.

Lilly made the attendees aware of how federal and state laws have addressed this issue over the decades in schools, including Title IX, DASA and New York State labor law; and explained how the law defines sexual harassment. Attendees at the assembly were given specific examples and also made aware of behaviors to avoid.



# Using Technology to Strategize for Success With Blended Learning



*"Blended learning is when the digital tools are used as a resource to help assist with the instructional goals, instead of the technology being the sole focus of the lesson," Kauter said.*



On the heels of this important upgrade, the district has embarked on a comprehensive shift to the blended learning model, in which the most valuable learning strategies are first identified, and then instructional technology devices and resources are used as tools to make the strategies more efficient and increase the learning experience for students. This blended environment will promote improved performance and rigorous academic standards.

The assessment of these learning strategies is based on work by researcher and educator John Hattie, who took numerous surveys and research from thousands

of school districts around the world and quantified a value-added number for each strategy. The district plans to focus on the strategies which will have the greatest impact on student achievement and growth. The district's digital software and programs will complement the instruction in the classroom. These tools include Castle Learning, CodeMonkey, EDpuzzle, Explain Everything, G Suite, Pear Deck, Poll Everywhere, Soundtrap and WeVideo.

"Blended learning is when the digital tools are used as a resource to help assist with the instructional goals, instead of the



technology being the sole focus of the lesson," Kauter said. "What we want to do is take these learning strategies that the research shows are successful and work in a traditional classroom environment, and merge them together with the Chromebooks and instructional software we have."

This initiative will be coupled with significant professional development, using a push-in model of one-on-one professional development through Western Suffolk BOCES, and targeting teachers and staff members so they are comfortable with the blended learning strategies and Chromebooks. Seven innovative teachers were

recently selected to serve as educational technology mentors – two each at the high school and middle school, and one each at JFK, JQA and May Moore – to work with other teachers to assist them to integrate technology and the blended learning model. The goal is to build capacity within the schools and empower all teachers to use technology resources for instructional purposes. "When computers and one-to-one initiatives were first introduced 5-10 years ago, the focus was on the device," Kauter said. "Now it is coming full circle. We are focused on what our instructional goals are and how we can use these tools to get there."



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# Bond Update

The district recently embarked on another round of crucial improvement projects as part of the 2015 bond referendum, including:

- New main entrances at JQA, May Moore and Robert Frost, with full canopies and new facades.
- Seven new, second-floor science labs at Robert Frost, sized to state requirements, with corresponding roofing, air conditioning and heating work.
- Bathroom renovations with new tile and fixtures at JQA, May Moore and Robert Frost.
- New asphalt track and full irrigation at back of the building at Robert Frost.
- New front sidewalk and cafeteria windows at May Moore.
- New security vestibule at Robert Frost, completed last spring.

Additionally, several nonbond capital projects were completed:

- A brand-new, expanded and repaved JQA parking lot, including 25 additional parking spaces in the driveway.
- New pre-K entrances at JQA and May Moore.

