

The STANDARD

ISSUE 3

SPRING 2019

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEER PARK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Message from *your Superintendent*

As I write this letter announcing my resignation as superintendent for the purpose of retirement, effective July 1, I am filled with both excitement and angst. I have known nothing but hard work and study since my youth. It will be a huge transition to a life of quasi-leisure. My 45 years in education found its best and most rewarding leadership experience in this wonderful district that I am so proud to call my second home.

There have been so many accomplishments that earmark my career here, both in academics and other areas, including:

- Offering no AP courses in 2003 to over 25 this year.
- Ranking in the bottom 25 percent academically in the Town of Babylon to in the top 25 percent now.
- Introducing formal observation and supervisory techniques with observation forms that I created.
- Fostering data-driven instruction.
- Being selected to work with the state education department to create and review exams and participate in various committees for new innovations.
- Implementing guidelines for new curricula and Next Generation Standards.
- Maintaining the fiscal stability of the district through collaboration with the assistant superintendent of business and operations.
- Successfully negotiating many union contracts by direct involvement such as developing new and creative salary schedules.
- Promoting myriad school safety initiatives.
- Keeping an open dialogue with the community, employees and the Board of Education, and never shying away from meeting with anyone.
- Taking people to task when warranted.
- Highly visible at community and school events.
- A strong believer in succession planning, such as training and grooming staff for promotional positions.
- Standing strong in my convictions and beliefs, even when faced with outside opposition.

I can go on and on, but bragging is not in my nature. Having a Board of Education and staff that are so cohesive and amenable to dialogue and suggestions really helped me to lay the groundwork that has set this district on a continued trajectory of student success. I do feel so honored and blessed to have served this community, employees and students. Thank you all from the deepest part of my soul.

Sincerely,
Eva J. Demyen



JAMES CUMMINGS *Announced as New Superintendent*

James Cummings has been named the new superintendent of schools for the district, replacing the retiring Eva J. Demyen. His hiring was announced at the Board of Education's March 26 business meeting, to the applause of colleagues, family and community members.



Cummings had served as Deer Park's assistant superintendent for pupil personnel services since 2016. He began his Deer Park career in 1997 as a business teacher at the high school, after four years in corporate sales for Cigna and MCI/Worldcom. He previously served as Deer Park High School principal and Robert Frost principal and associate principal, and the high school's varsity track, winter track and cross-country coach.

"I am both proud and humbled to be appointed as the next superintendent of Deer Park Schools," Cummings said. "Having been in this district for over 20 years, as a coach, teacher, assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent, I have seen the amazing students of Deer Park accomplish so much. As the superintendent, I promise that I will uphold the great traditions of Deer Park Schools. Equally as important, I will work tirelessly along with our wonderful staff to ensure that our district stays on the forefront of current educational trends, and that our students are prepared for the ever-changing world that they will be thrust into upon leaving us. I love this community and look forward to serving it in my new capacity."

Deer Park DECA Brings Home Four State Trophies

A group of 28 business students from the high school's DECA club recently competed at DECA's New York State Career Development Conference in Rochester, with two pairs of Deer Park students earning trophies. Jasleen Kaur and Amar Qasir came in second place in the Financial Services team event, while Eiman Nawaz and Yasmeen Syedda-Hensley won fifth place in Travel & Tourism. The four trophy winners qualified to compete against more than 18,000 high school students from across the country and around the world at the International Career Development Conference in Orlando, Florida, at the end of April.



HS Holds First Math and Science Honor Societies Induction

The high school celebrated a new tradition on Feb. 4 with the school's first National Math and National Science honor societies induction ceremony, held in the school's auditorium. To qualify for acceptance into either honor society, students needed to have an overall grade point average of 85 or higher, and a content-specific GPA in either math or science of 90 or higher.

A total of 29 exceptional juniors and seniors were the first to be welcomed to the National Math Honor Society, which was formed in 1957: Aliseena Aiwaszali, Nova

Alim, Huda Ameen, Audrey Barke, Ayden Caldea, Haley Celona, Saiansh Chaddha, Angela D'Antonio, Sabrina Felipe, Dana Laissle, Lindsey Lam, Julianna Lasorsa, Regan Mays, Zubaer Mohiudden, Joshua Murphy, Joseph Ogden, Amanda Poggioli, Michael Quinones, Omar Rahim, Alyssa Robb, Matthew Rosati, Nimra Salim, Khabiba Shahid, Tasfia Shaikh, Jessica Siford, Madison Steddick, Alisha Suhail, Gavin Thomas and Purnava Zakaria.

Joining the National Science Honor Society, formed in 2000, were 33 juniors and seniors: Aiwaszali, Alim, Dana



Ali, Ameen, Barke, Deirdre Burke, Caldea, Betul Camlica, Chaddha, Azim Chowdhury, Jillian Cornelia, D'Antonio, Felipe, Ahmed Iqbal, Lam, Lasorsa, Mays, Mohiudden,

Murphy, Ogden, Poggioli, Quinones, Rahim, Joshua Rivera, Rosati, Salim, Shahid, Shaikh, Siford, Steddick, Suhail, Thomas and Zakaria.



LEGISLATOR BERLAND BRINGS Love of READING to JQA

As part of the school's 16th annual Read Enjoy and Discover program, JQA was visited by Suffolk County Legislator Susan Berland, who read two of her favorites, Faith McNulty's "Arty the Smarty" and Tamara Kitt's "The Boy Who Fooled the Giant," to the excited students. READ is a collaborative effort among parents, students and staff to build a reading partnership between home and school and to help foster the love of reading at home. The JQA students read more than 11,000 books, meeting the school's goal of 10,000.

Aiding in Acceptance With Frost's BandAid Project

Robert Frost held its fourth annual BandAid Project on March 15. Developed by Frost speech-language pathologist Stephanie O'Connell to coincide with April as National Autism Awareness Month, the daylong event – which won the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission's Inter-Faith Anti-Bias Task Force Award last year – works to increase acceptance of people with autism and developmental disabilities rather than just awareness and provides students with a firsthand experience of the daily struggles of people with disabilities.

Participating students wear a Band-aid across their mouth for the entire day, and must use pen and paper, gestures and even body language to communicate with their teachers and peers while taking part in all required activities of the school day. At BandAid's conclusion, the students gather



to play a game or complete an activity reflecting on the difficulties they had without the ability to communicate like others.

“Doing the BandAid Project for three straight years was a really good experience,

and I looked forward to it every year,” said eighth-grader David Perez. “Once you put the Band-aid on, everything changes for you. It gave me a new point of view on what people with disabilities have to deal with in daily life.”

May Moore's Math and Science Carnival

Spurs Thinking Skills



May Moore and the Parent Faculty Club hosted the school's annual Math and Science Carnival, with students visiting five different stations: Bouncing Buoyancy, I-ath, Marshmallow Geometry, Patterns and Radical Reactions. The festivities concluded with a fun assembly program by scientist Hector Von Vector.

“Our students engaged in applying higher-order thinking skills such as estimating, making predictions and recording their findings throughout the carnival,” Principal Alicia Konecny said.

*****ECRWSS***
Postal Customer**

MESSAGE FROM BOARD TRUSTEE *Keith Rooney*

I wanted to drop a note and thank you all for your support. After volunteering and serving on the Board of Education as vice president and trustee for the last 12 years, I will not be seeking reelection in May 2019. Serving Deer Park has been an honor and something I will always cherish. As a member of Deer Park High School's graduating Class of 1985, I always took pride serving this great community. I have been a resident of Deer Park for all of my life, and my wife and I have raised our three children in Deer Park's schools. My current role at National Grid requires me to travel almost weekly, making this role harder to sustain. I've been on a lot of teams during my life and couldn't be prouder to have worked with Deer Park's school board, superintendent, staff, administration and dedicated employees. Together we have developed a great future for all our students. Serving on the special education and energy committees has also been one of my most rewarding life experiences. I'm excited about the future of this district and will always be proud of all we accomplished together. Thank you all for your friendship, support and dedication to our great employees and students! Falcon for life!



Keith Rooney
Board of Education Trustee

Alicia Konecny Named Next Assistant Superintendent

The district named Alicia Konecny as its assistant superintendent for pupil personnel services, replacing James Cummings, the district's new superintendent of schools. The promotion was announced at the Board of Education's March 26 meeting.



Konecny, a resident of Deer Park and graduate of Deer Park High School, had served as principal of May Moore since 2004. She previously worked as an assistant principal at both May Moore and JQA, and assistant principal at JFK. She began her Deer Park career at JFK, teaching third and fifth grade.

Kelly Benson Named New Principal of JFK

Kelly Benson has been named the new principal of JFK, replacing the retiring Susan Bonner. For the past three years, Benson has served as an associate principal at JFK. She previously worked as an elementary school teacher in the Sachem School District and as a New York City police officer.

