

SMITHTOWN BULLETIN



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Message



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JANUARY 2026



SUPERINTENDENT

Message

Dear Students, Staff, and Families,

After a few relatively mild winters, we have recently been reminded of the power of Mother Nature. I am hopeful that you and your loved ones have fared well and kept warm! Given that we are half way through the school year and warmer, longer days are ahead, I felt it would be a good idea to reflect upon the first half of the school year at Tuesday's Board of Education meeting. I was very proud to highlight the successful implementation of the smartphone ban which has led to higher student engagement and socialization. I also praised the improved district governance and discussed the benefits of having a positive, productive Board of Education. Next, I shared the work our district leadership team has done with our teachers and administrators to better support them with their professional growth. This work directly supports our mission to provide a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment for students to learn, where all are valued.



Sincerely,
Dr. Secaur

CURRICULUM CORNER

PERFECT PITCH!

Smithtown High School East and West students put their best foot forward on January 15, as they participated in the annual Perfect Pitch speed networking event, featuring a special “Boardroom Finals” twist.

Hosted by Smithtown Industry Advisory Board (IAB) Executive Director, Phil Como and Smithtown Central School District Director of Career and Technical Education, Christine LoFrese, the event challenged students to rotate through three real-world business scenarios, delivering 60-second pitches to industry professionals and judges. Top performers from each scenario advanced to the Boardroom Finals, where critical thinking and problem solving skills took center stage.

First place winner, Ashlynn Renkowski of High School West, earned the title of 2026 Chairwoman of the Board and received a commemorative desk plaque and an Amazon gift card.

“The work being done here is phenomenal,” said SCSD Superintendent, Dr. Mark Secaur. “This program has done an amazing job, and today they’ve taken it to another level.”



PAWS, PLAY AND PROGRAMMING!

Third grade students at Dogwood Elementary School are learning about using code to give directions to computers and robots!

Led by library media specialist, Mrs. Charumaneeroj, students worked as groups to build a code for their "robot dog" to guide it through a maze.

Students incorporated the coding technique If/Then to give their robot dog rules to follow throughout the maze.

Our young learners took turns acting as the robot dog, and as computer coders, to successfully collect bones and get their dog back home to the doghouse.



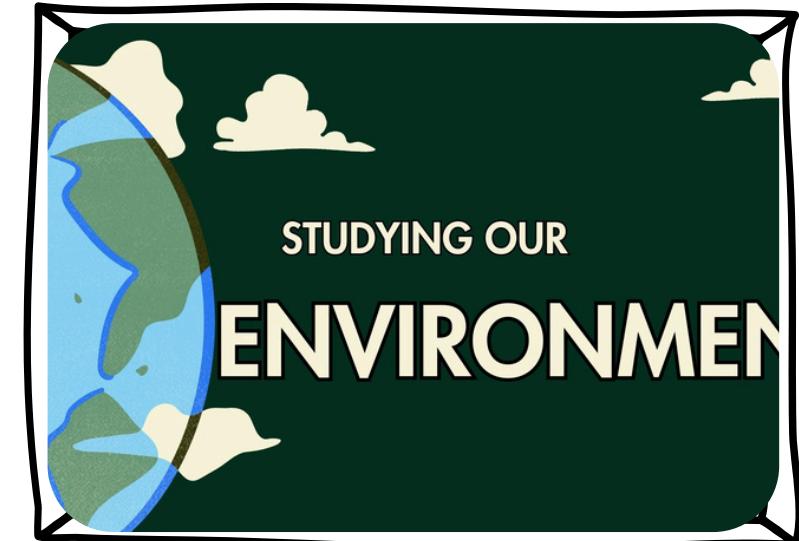
CURRICULUM CORNER

FROM CLASSROOM TO COASTLINE

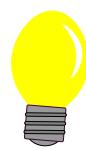
H.S. West Marine Ecology students have been selected to participate in a Long Island Sound partnership program led by the Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE), in collaboration with the Atlantic States Marine Conservation Society and Friends of the Bay.

Through in-class presentations, students will explore the Long Island Sound's environmental successes as well as the challenges it faces. The program also includes a hands on conservation project focused on protecting and preserving the Sound.

In May, participating students from schools across the region will gather at The Waterfront Center in Oyster Bay for a full day of immersive learning on the Sound. This unique opportunity allows students to connect classroom learning with real-world environmental stewardship while deepening their understanding of our local marine ecosystem.



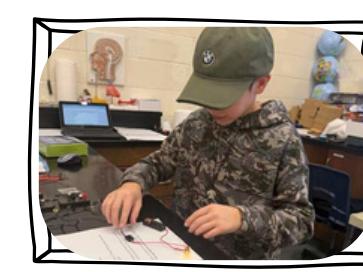
THEY SEE THE LIGHT!



Nesaquake seventh graders traded textbooks for wires to tackle the code of circuitry:

- Series Circuits: The "One Path" approach. If one bulb goes out, the whole room goes dark. It's a lesson in high-stakes teamwork.
- Parallel Circuits: The "Independence" model. Each bulb has its own lane. One fails? The rest keep shining. This is why your fridge stays on when a lightbulb burns out!

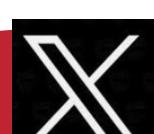
"We aren't just lighting up tiny LEDs; we're wiring the problem-solving skills they'll use for life," exclaimed science teacher, Dr. Bennett.



A JOY FOR JOURNALISM

Dogwood fifth graders had the unique opportunity to experience the exciting world of broadcast journalism at the Newsday offices in Melville! Students learned about news reporting, editing, social media and advertising. They experienced using a green screen to report the weather and even participated in a mock press conference.

The fifth graders left with a new skill set to use during their Dogwood News 5 Broadcasts.



SCSD ACHIEVEMENTS

ALEXANDRA GOES "GOLD"

Alexandra DeDonato, a senior at High School West and a member of Girl Scout Troop 2479, has earned the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest honor in Girl Scouts.

Alexandra organized a community clothing drive that collected more than 100 pieces of professional attire and volunteered over 100 hours of service to help expand the reach of the Brookhaven-based organization Dress for Success through her "Career Corner" initiative.

"It was nice to help women and hopefully help them get jobs and reenter the workforce," Alexandra said.

Her project partnered with Dress for Success to help women and students access professional clothing and resources needed for interviews, competitions, and career opportunities. Alexandra also collaborated with High School West DECA advisor, Mrs. Stephanie Torlentino to create a new "Career Closet" at High School West, giving students free access to professional clothing for interviews, mock trials, and other important events.

Alexandra's story was also covered by the New York Post and Fox 5!



BEST IN BOOKMARKS!

Mt. Pleasant Elementary second grader, Maggie Alambra, has won the 2026 Annual Smithtown Library Children's Department K-5 "Design A Monthly Bookmark Contest!"

Maggie was one of 12 winners out of 200 submissions. Maggie's beautiful bookmark is available the month of January in all four Smithtown Library locations and features Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, and Reading is Snow Much Fun.



ON TARGET AT TACKAN!

"They are the ones who work hard and never give up...they are the ones who stand up for what's right...they are the students who notice when someone is alone."

Those were the words of Tackan Elementary School Principal, Matt Furey, as he proudly honored his young students with Tackan Elementary's "On Target" award. The award is given to outstanding students who demonstrate determination, kindness, courage, intelligence and empathy towards their classmates.

Students were nominated by their teachers for the award and were given a certificate, a pencil, and an Italian ice!



COMMUNITY NEWS

WAY TO GO, MR. TOTH! 🎉

For his work with High School East leadership students, Social Studies teacher, Joseph Toth, has been named one of just 15 educators nationwide to receive the 2026 Lead4Change Fellowship.

"To be one of only 15 people selected nationwide is a great honor," Toth said.

East Leadership students traditionally organize meaningful schoolwide initiatives, including the annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, Pep Rally, Spooky Hallways, a blood drive, and participation in the No Place for Hate anti-bullying pledge.

This year, Mr. Toth expanded the program's impact even further by organizing eight service-learning projects throughout the spring. One standout initiative involved partnering with the Interact Club to grow hydroponic gardens to provide fresh, healthy food donations to the Smithtown Emergency Food Pantry.

As a Lead4Change Fellow, Mr. Toth will receive a \$500 grant to enhance his classroom for the upcoming school year, along with invitations to professional conferences and national events.

Congratulations, Mr. Toth, on this outstanding achievement!



EXCELLENCE ON STAGE!

Great Hollow Middle School eighth grader Erin Risolo took the stage at Theatre Three in Port Jefferson this month, cast as Laurie in a production of, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*.

"Performing is something I'm passionate about, and I'm excited to take on this role," Erin told us.

Erin began acting in community theatre at the age of 10 and has performed in several mainstage productions at local theaters across Long Island.



JOIN OUR TEAM!!!

There are several openings in the Smithtown Central School District. Those interested can submit a letter, resume, and two professional references to Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Neil Katz at: employment@smithtown.k12.ny.us



COMMUNITY NEWS

MASTERS OF THEIR CRAFT

The Smithtown Central School District is proud to recognize Mills Pond STEM Instructional Specialist, Serena Spata and Tackan Elementary STEM Instructional Specialist, David Junz, both of whom were accepted into the prestigious New York State Master Teacher Program.

The program honors outstanding K-12 public school STEM teachers and counselors who demonstrate excellence in instruction, a commitment to their own professional growth, and a passion for collaborating with colleagues to inspire the next generation of STEM leaders.

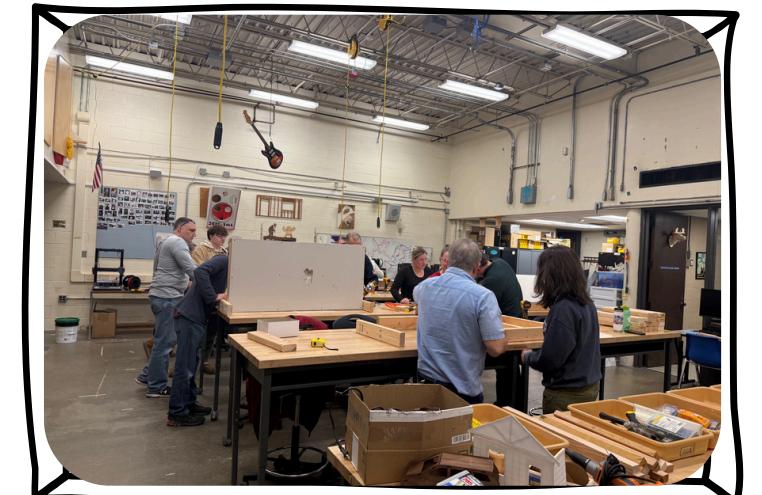
Both Spata and Junz have dedicated 25 years to the Smithtown Central School District.



PARENT UNIVERSITY: HOME REPAIR 101



Thank you to everyone who joined us for Parent University at High School West! Technology teachers Brian Costello (HSW) and Tom Nettleton (HSE) led an engaging, hands-on session focused on the basics of home repair. Participants learned about essential tools, hardware, and products, with a special emphasis on sheetrock repair. It was a great evening of learning, skill-building, and community connection!



E-BIKE SAFETY AT EAST

High School East recently hosted an E-Bike safety presentation.

With representatives from Stony Brook Children's Hospital, along with David Regina, Suffolk County Police Deputy Police of Patrol attended to share their expert insight. Students not only learned about E-Bike safety, but also state laws.

The visit also aligned with recent communication from Principal McNeil, who reminded families that riding an e-bike on school property is strictly prohibited unless the bike is walked.



SPORTS ZONE

SUPER SOPHOMORE!



Congratulations to High School East sophomore Matt McDermott who reached 100 career wins! Matt won the Suffolk Division I title at 131 pounds last year and was the runner-up at the state tournament.



STRIKE!!!!



Smithtown East Junior, Trishna Desai recently bowled an 804 series, the first 800 series in Suffolk County girls bowling in over 6 years! Trishna's games were 268, 279 and 257. Her 226.6 average is number one in the county!



MR. 1,000!



By becoming the newest member of the 1,000 point club, High School West basketball star Michael Cascione was honored before Tuesday night's basketball game. Michael scored his milestone points last Friday night. Joining in the celebration Tuesday evening was head coach Michael Agostino, and Michael's parents, Michael and Debbie. Congratulations!

