



THE ISLANDER

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DESIGNED, DETERMINED & DELIBERATE!

Over the course of the 2023-24 school year, the district's instructional focus is directly related to fulfilling the final objectives of the district's three-year strategic plan to meet the needs of all students and ensure they are prepared to become global citizens.

Launched in 2021, the strategic plan has defined the district's vision and identified various goals



and objectives. The plan was built upon the following four pillars:

- **Access and Equity/Academic Achievement for All Students:** Develop a highly engaging academic program by monitoring, assessing and continuously improving teaching and learning.
- **21st-Century Learning/Prepare Our Students to Be College and Career Ready:** Further research and develop programs and curricula that foster student engagement, discovery and inquiry to empower students to facilitate their own learning.
- **Engage All Stakeholders in the Learning Community:** Foster a culture of growth and academic achievement

by developing a shared vision among all stakeholders.

- **Social and Emotional Learning:** Further research and develop programs, partnerships and curricula that focus on our students' social and emotional well-being by teaching self-awareness of stress and stress factors, relationship skills and reflective, responsible decision-making within a nurturing environment.

With these pillars in mind, the district adopted the theme of "Designed, Determined and Deliberate" for the 2023-24 school year, which focuses on five key instructional initiatives:



STATE STANDARDS

The current curriculum has been written to ensure students are getting the highest-quality experience in our classrooms to help shape our students' mindset and behaviors for academic success, college and career readiness, and social and emotional development.



COMPUTER SCIENCE & DIGITAL FLUENCY

To prepare our students for the careers of the 21st century, they need to know how to live productively and safely in a technology-focused world. Students will learn the essential features of digital technologies, how to communicate and create using those tools, and why and how they work.



FOSTERING CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY AND A SENSE OF AGENCY

To unleash the power of curiosity, teachers provide students with multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression to further promote academic achievement. Students will be creating wildly important goals and tracking their progress to develop metacognitive skills, learning to be reflective about their own work.



COMPUTER-BASED TESTING

To support the districtwide rollout of computer-based testing for grades 3-8, all teachers in these grade levels have been trained in the use of a testing program called Datamate, which is fully aligned to the format of the state tests. This will ensure our students are set up for success in this new format and with the use of online tools.



BELONGING

We are continuing with our districtwide belonging initiative to further develop and strengthen student relationships. We will be expanding our use of the Harmony program and developing themed nights to bring our families into our schools.

DESIGNED, DETERMINED & DELIBERATE!

To prepare each student to reach their full potential, the district has placed an emphasis on innovation in teaching and learning, embracing diversity and inclusion, strengthening our connections with students and the community, and social and emotional learning. Each of these elements ties in with the instructional initiatives outlined on Page


1 to ensure academic achievement for all students.

“Our district continues to be committed to providing a first-class education to the students,” said Superintendent of Schools Vincent Randazzo. “A significant factor of this nearly completed strategic plan can be attributed to the skill and dedication of

Island Park administrators and teachers who go above and beyond each day for our students.”

As we work towards the completion of all the objectives in the current strategic plan, the district will begin building the next five-year plan to start in the 2024-25 school year. We are excited to see what lies ahead!

Renewed and Expanded Library Enrichment



Francis X. Hegarty students have always looked forward to attending library class, and this year is no different. Students are eager to see what's in store when they step into Enrichment Through Media Studies, being taught by Island Park enrichment teacher Robert Ferrante during their library period. Enrichment Through Media Studies is an enhanced STEM component added to the existing library curriculum this year. The new program promotes activities that encourage inquiry-based learning while continuing to support grade-level curriculum and traditional library skills.

Inquiry-based learning is a learning process that engages students by making real-world connections through exploration and questioning. It is an approach to learning that encourages students to engage in problem-solving and experiential learning.

“Enrichment Through Media Studies will allow students to explore, problem-solve and work together,” Mr. Ferrante said. “Students will ask a lot of questions and will understand that there is more than one way to approach an issue.” This welcome addition to the library curriculum supports the district's efforts to create engaging inquiry-based opportunities for learners to “discover” by making real world connections through exploration and

high-level questioning.

For example, kindergarten and first grade students were recently instructed to build a house using Keva blocks. Each house needed a roof, door and windows as basic elements, but it was then up to the students to work together to design and build their individual houses. Once the project was completed, students were encouraged to discuss what worked and what did not by reflecting on the design process. Through this type of learning, students engage in the design process with the overall aim of building skills in science, technology, engineering, art and math.

Mr. Ferrante is excited about what's to come in the year ahead. He is confident his students will enjoy using their imagination and being creative as they explore hands-on lessons that will challenge them to think outside the box.



EIGHTH GRADE

CIVIC-ORIENTED CAPSTONE PROJECT

Contributing to the district's efforts to prepare our students to be global citizens, eighth graders at Lincoln Orens Middle School have begun preparing for this year's Capstone projects. In addition to empowering students to take an active role in their community and work with others, these community service projects earn a point towards the NYS Seal of Civic Readiness, a formal high school graduation recognition.

The middle school Capstone Project is a hands-on way for our students to use their skills and talents to investigate an issue of personal interest and community need while gaining a greater awareness of that need and then determining how to best address it through service learning. The goal of the project is for students to understand that by using their voice, they can raise awareness by educating others and engage in service to take action to solve a problem, resulting in meaningful service that connects and enhances their academic learning skills.

"Through the Capstone Project, our students are given the opportunity to develop their critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills," said Lincoln Orens Middle School Principal Dr. Bruce Hoffman. "These skills, along with other 21st Century Skills, are necessary for our students to effectively exercise their civic power."

Throughout the six-month process of the Capstone Project, students will be responsible for completing the tasks listed in the chart below.

Last year, each of the eighth grade classes brainstormed one problem they saw in their community that they wanted to see progressively change. These problems ranged from upgrading school athletic fields to teen vaping. Overall, the student Capstone projects were well thought out. Students did their research, kept a journal of reflections throughout the project,

participated in meetings with project advisory staff and ended with group presentations of the projects.

Different from the class group presentation, this year Lincoln Orens students will work in small groups of two to four as they begin to explore topics of interest to them and work towards their end-of-year presentation.

The completed Capstone Project will allow students to demonstrate their readiness to make a positive difference in their communities through the applied combination of civic knowledge, skills and actions, mindset and experiences.

"Bringing the middle school Capstone Project to our district not only provides our students with the opportunity to enter Long Beach High School with a greater chance of earning a special diploma seal, it has also been the spark for a districtwide civic readiness initiative by our Superintendent, Mr. Randazzo," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Offerman-Celentano.

"We look forward to watching the Capstone Projects unfold in the months ahead," said Mr. Randazzo.

“Through the Capstone Project, our students are given the opportunity to develop their critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills. These skills, along with other 21st Century Skills, are necessary for our students to effectively exercise their civic power.”

– Lincoln Orens Middle School
Principal Dr. Bruce Hoffman

1

Identify a civic issue (problem) facing them, their school or their community.

2

Analyze a civic issue (problem), evaluate alternative solutions, design and/or execute a solution for this problem.

3

Take informed action to address the civic issue.

4

Reflect on what they have learned about their school or community from the Capstone Project.

5

Make a presentation about their Civic Readiness Capstone Project.

Island Park Public Schools

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ECRWSS RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Island Park Welcomes New Staff for 2023-24 School Year

The district welcomes the following staff members and wishes them much success in the year ahead:

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

- Patricia Augeri – kindergarten teacher (FXH).
- Alisa Burdish – BCBA (FXH).
- Alexandra Candon – long-term per diem sub (FXH).
- Marissa Catalano – grade 2 teacher (FXH).
- Michelle Cronolly – grade 5 teacher (LOMS).
- Dayna D'Alessio – half-time speech teacher.
- Alexandria DiCaterino – universal pre-K teacher (LOMS).
- Antonio DiLorenzo – long-term per diem sub (LOMS).
- Christina Gardrvits – long-term per diem sub (LOMS).

- Thomas Hirdt – long-term per diem sub (FXH).
- Alyssa Izzo – long-term per diem sub (FXH).
- Alissa Luczaj – special education teacher (FXH).
- Megan O'Connor – music teacher (FXH).
- Gianna Petrillo – long-term per diem sub (LOMS).
- Veronica Stapleton – long-term per diem sub (LOMS).

NEW BUSINESS OFFICE STAFF

- Jacqueline Curtis – senior account clerk/payroll.
- Kelly Gelish – part-time assistant bus dispatcher.

Welcome to the Island Park Family!

In early October, Island Park School District welcomed new families to the first PTA meeting of the new school year. The Meet and Greet evening took place at Francis X. Hegarty Elementary School and allowed new and returning families to meet district and building administration, members of the Board of Education, the executive board of the Parent and Teacher Association, teachers and staff. The theme of the evening was the district motto, "Together We Are Better!" Attendees were happy to learn about the many ways to get involved and support the efforts of the PTA at both Francis X. Hegarty Elementary and Lincoln Orens Middle School.

The next PTA meeting will take place on Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at Lincoln Orens Middle School.

