

# TIDE

## *Enriching* MINDS AND HEARTS

A rich and challenging curriculum is a staple of the district, with a wealth of opportunities for academic, social and emotional growth. From elementary school through high school, students are exploring their passions while enriching their minds and hearts.

Children are learning from an early age how to become good citizens, treat each other with respect and contribute to kind and caring communities. In the elementary schools, students are not only introduced to a series of ethical values known as the six pillars of character, but they become active participants in their character education through skits and art projects.

At the middle school, students are taking science and math classes a year earlier than many of their peers around the state. Instead of offering ninth-grade science and math classes to a small percentage of advanced eighth-graders, the entire eighth-grade now takes Living Environment and Algebra.

"It's part of a bigger vision," said Edmund W. Miles Middle School Principal Edward Plaia,

who explained that when students take high school credit-bearing classes earlier, they have the flexibility to take more electives and advanced courses in high school.

By earning high school credits in middle school, it provides more chances to earn college credits in high school. The Advanced Placement program offers this opportunity through a rich selection of challenging courses that prepare students for the rigors of college. The district now offers 19 AP courses in art, English, math, music, social studies, science and world language, with more on the way next year.

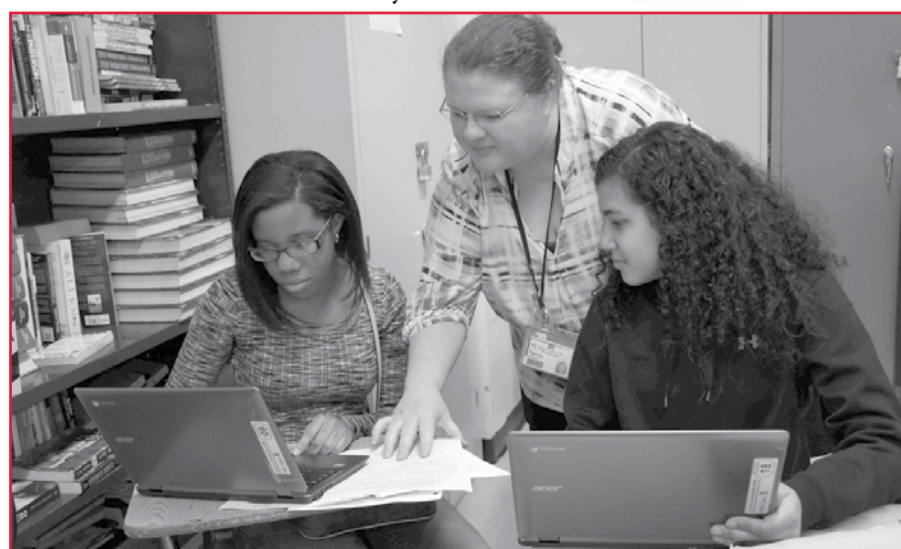
Amityville was among the first of districts on Long Island to offer the College Board's Advanced Placement Capstone program. This year, the district introduced the program with the first of two courses, AP Seminar, which was opened to 10th graders in place of their regular literature-based English class. Through team and individual projects, students are doing in-depth research on topics that interest them. Beginning in September, the district will add

the second part of the Capstone program, AP Research. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in Seminar and Research and on four additional AP Exams of their choosing will qualify for the AP Capstone Diploma.

An additional opportunity for students to enroll in college-level courses and receive college credit is with Syracuse University Project Advance. These classes are light on lectures and heavy on hands-on activities, which allow both independent exploration and collaborative experiences. Teachers serve as mentors as students become stewards of their own education.

The district's Five-Year Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Board of Education in September, includes among its goals, "implementing engaging, rigorous curricula and course offerings." From the moment students enter Amityville schools, they are given opportunities to explore their interests, challenge themselves intellectually and make positive differences in their community.

*"A successful school district must have meaningful enrichment opportunities for all students," said Superintendent Dr. Mary T. Kelly. "In Amityville, where we are 'Achieving Excellence Together,' we are constantly working to revise, refine and reinvigorate our programs to provide the best opportunities for academic and personal growth."*



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## AP Capstone

The district has launched the first of a two-part research-based course, Advanced Placement Capstone. More than 40 sophomores at the high school are taking AP Seminar, which takes the place of the traditionally literature focused 10th grade English class.

The first part of the course is a team research project. Each group selects a topic of interest and researches different perspectives before creating a multimedia presentation.

Using the skills acquired in a team setting, students then move on to individual research projects. This year's theme was labor and work, and students had to analyze a series of documents before choosing their specific topic for further study. Although their projects are done independently, students still collaborate. Teacher Allison Reichel explained that discussion helps stimulate understanding and comprehension of complicated subjects.

"This is much more than just reading a book and being able to explain it," said teacher Miesje Governale. "The level of rigor and critical thinking needed to succeed in this class is a lot more than they would need in English 10."

Students are responsible for managing their own time to complete their research project, a level of independence that prepares them for college. They are also becoming familiar with industry-standard technology by using Chromebooks to research and write, and Google Docs to collaborate.

Joda Miley said the skills she is learning apply in many other classes, including the independent science research program. Josh Fields took the class because he was looking for a greater challenge, and said the level of rigor keeps him focused. Courtney Evans has learned how to properly cite her work and likes that she can pick topics that interest her. She particularly enjoyed looking into the effects of poverty on education.



## Character Matters in Amityville

The six pillars of character — caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness — are emphasized starting in the early grades in Amityville. While many programs focus on enrichment of the mind, the Character Counts program is about enrichment of the heart.

Each pillar of character has a corresponding color, for example yellow reminds children that the golden rule is treating each other respectfully.

Park Avenue Memorial Elementary School held a Character Counts week in which students were recognized for performing good deeds and making good choices. The school also focused on two pillars of character each month and Student Council members performed humorous skits during assemblies to show how to best exemplify those traits.

"We are seeing students making good choices and treating others with respect," said Principal Robyn Santiago. "It's coming from the students, that they think it is important to use these positive character traits."

Students at Northwest Elementary School have also been learning about the six pillars of characters through art. Under the direction of art teacher Lydia Robinson, each class made a friendship flower with students designing individual petals with their name, a drawing and a friendly message. Children also took one of the six pillars and used the word to make an art project with patterns and color.

## Gaining Valuable Work Experience

In order to prepare for success in their future careers, the district offers a Work Experience and Job Development program, which places middle school and high school students in part-time jobs, internships and volunteer opportunities.

Students have received local job placements at national chain stores, fast food restaurants, main street businesses, child-care centers, car dealerships, real estate agencies, movie theaters, banks and the Amityville Public Library. In-district opportunities include working in central or school offices, the custodial department and school stores. Participants have also secured summer internships with Amityville village and local businesses.

The program is led by Peter Paternostro, administrator for pupil personnel services, and Karen Gross, high school transition coordinator. They work with students on skills such as resume building, thank you letters, mock interviews, financial literacy and job etiquette such as dressing appropriately. Additionally, they arrange trips to job fairs and work sites, and bring in guest speakers representing various careers.

Networking has been the key to success for the program. The school district maintains close relationships with the local business community through the Amityville School-Business Advisory Board, the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. Through a partnership with Junior Achievement, several high school students interested in careers working with children taught a community and career-based lesson to classes at Northwest Elementary School.

"One of the greatest predictors of professional and career success is the ability to acclimate to the workplace at a young age," Mr. Paternostro said. "Since the start of the program, more than 100 students have benefitted from it. We are constantly expanding this program which already offers so many great work experience opportunities to students."



## Academic Acceleration

While ninth-graders at Edmund W. Miles Middle School take courses that earn them high school credit, it was less common for eighth-graders to start fulfilling their graduation requirements. That has changed with the acceleration of all students in math and science.

The school began accelerating the full eighth grade last year by making Living Environment, a course that ends in a Regents exam, the new standard science course. This year, the initiative has expanded to math, with all eighth-graders now enrolled in Algebra 1. In the past, approximately 20 percent of students were taking these courses a year early.

"We wanted students to be able to go into ninth-grade with high school credits already earned," said Principal Edward Plaia. "It's part of the big picture, as this will open up more electives and more enrichment opportunities in high school."

Natasha Lim, chairwoman of the science department, said the Living Environment curriculum is rigorous but the experiments allow students to become independent thinkers. The science teachers are committed to success by offering extra help and identifying meaningful field trip opportunities.

"What we are asking of the students is a tremendous amount of work, and each and every one has risen to the challenge," she said. "We have spectacular teachers with a vast amount of knowledge."

The seventh-grade science curriculum has been revised to combine two years of science instruction into one and prepare students for the Regents course.

This year, algebra is the new standard for eighth grade math, and pre-algebra has been moved to seventh grade. In algebra, there are more in-depth and multi-step questions, and students are also using graphing calculators for the first time. Math teacher Urszula Przech said her students take the class seriously and understand that it is required for high school graduation. For those who need additional support, they get an extra period of math every other day.

Ms. Przech added that accelerating students in math will help them in their higher-level science courses, including the independent science research program which begins in eighth grade.

## Bringing College Courses to High School

Amityville Memorial High School students are getting a college experience through Syracuse University Project Advance. The courses follow SU's curriculum and participants are coming away with transferable college credits.

Science teacher Andrew Henriksen teaches a full-year, lab-oriented forensics course. Students learn about the roles of forensic scientists, study physical evidence such as fingerprints and DNA, review actual criminal cases and examine documents. Dr. Michael Sponsler, a chemistry professor at Syracuse, visited the class and spoke about a case he studied.

"It's an actual college course and it's taught at a college level," said Mr. Henriksen, who often shows his students TV crime shows after a lesson to have them identify real and fake forensics techniques.

Senior Anthony Ring enjoys applying what he learns through hands-on experiments. He now has an interest in pursuing criminal law in college because of the class, and will have one requirement already completed with four college credits in his pocket.

SUPA's public policy course allows students to earn three college credits and as in an alternative to the 12th grade government class. Students learn about the different levels of government, do research, identify societal problems and complete feasibility studies.

Instead of a test, students actually work to get legislation passed. They learn about public policy by creating a bill and lobbying for its passage. The team of Kevin Barrios, Christian Bethea and Stephen Gaon is moving forward on a law regarding chemicals that are used to clean commercial fishing boats. They have met with Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Office DuWayne Gregory and Adrienne Esposito of Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

Teacher Matt Greiss said that after identifying an issue and coming up with a policy alternative, students have to identify people in power who can effect change.

Senior Kayla James, whose project advocated requiring students to wear seatbelts on buses, said she took away interviewing skills that will help her in the future, particularly when meeting with prospective employers. She also learned how to identify credible sources when looking up information and how to separate facts from opinion.

The district also offers SUPA classes in economics and sociology and will introduce chemistry and physics next year.



# TOP of Their Class

Amityville Memorial High School is pleased to announce the Top 25 graduates for the class of 2017. Esteban Idrovo Ponce has been named the valedictorian and Lawrence Haave is the salutatorian.

Esteban, who plans to major in physics at Stony Brook University, is parliamentarian of the National Honor Society, vice president of the National World Language Honor Society, president of the Key Club and treasurer of the Drama Club. He has also been an active member of student government, the Debate Club, the Puerto Rican Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute, Mathletes and the track and field team while serving as a tutor and a volunteer with the Amityville Fire Department.

Lawrence, also planning to pursue a career in physics, is president of the National Honor Society, vice president of the Drama Club, past president of the Key Club and a member of WAC PAC, the National World Language Honor Society and student government. He is a founder of AVTV, a film-creating club at the school, and has also volunteered his time as a tutor. In the fall, he will enroll at New York University.

Both seniors are enrolled in the district's science research program, and are participating in research internships at Farmingdale State College. Esteban has been working with several complex software programs, while Lawrence is working with computer programming languages and studying data from active satellites to learn about massive galaxy clusters.



## Top 25

1. Esteban Idrovo Ponce
2. Lawrence Haave
3. Samad Arshad
4. Meghan Jacobsen
5. Kevin Barrios
6. Kayla James
7. Stephen Gaon
8. Cindy Cruz
9. Christine Brown
10. Nia Dennis
11. Eshwatti Sookram
12. Kiana Kearse
13. Alijah Benymon
14. Ariana Sims
15. Ashley Colas
16. Samantha Lawrence
17. Madison Daly
18. Elvis Amaya
19. Jameela Tracey
20. Lila Tarpley
21. Angel Williford
22. Jessi Cruz
23. Davianna Dinnoo
24. Benjamin Lopez
25. Kiara Kearse

## Warrior Winter Accomplishments

The winter sports season featured numerous accomplishments for Amityville's athletes.

The boys varsity track team won the Suffolk County championship under coach Reynolds Hawkins. Senior Emmanuel Oguntoye won the New York State championship in the triple jump and also received Suffolk County's Most

Outstanding Athlete Award. Mr. Hawkins won Suffolk County coach of the year.

Two basketball players each scored their 1,000th career points. Senior and four-year varsity starter La'Niya Clark reached the milestone for the Lady Warriors with a three-point shot in a game against Sayville. Junior Josh Serrano not only scored his 1,000th point for the boys varsity



team, he also set the single-game record with 45 points in a contest against Miller Place High School. He was also named to Newsday's All-Long Island basketball team.

Wrestler Deonte Wilson, a

junior, represented Amityville at the New York State wrestling championships after capturing the Section XI championship in the 285-pound weight class.



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