



THE ISLANDER

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ISLAND PARK SCHOOLS • **SPRING 2020 News**

The Island Park Public Schools have been committed to a smooth transition to distance learning during these past few months, while maintaining the strong sense of school connection and helping families cope with the challenges of the pandemic. Various initiatives were temporarily transferred to the home setting thanks to the world of technology, the dedication of staff members and the involvement of parents.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

A Continuity of Learning (COL) Plan was underway beginning day one of the school closure. Components included distance learning via online digital tools and Google Classroom for students in grades 1-6 and traditional learning packets for students in pre-K and kindergarten. COL also included a grab-and-go breakfast and lunch meals program and provided a child care program through SCOPE for children of health care workers and first responders. A Continuity of Operations (COO) Plan included maintenance of all business functions in school buildings and district offices (budgeting, purchasing, accounting, auditing, payroll, etc.) and facilities management operations (deep cleaning, sanitizing, indoor/outdoor maintenance, etc.).

With a focus on teaching and learning, students received a steady stream of assignments, and teachers checked in regularly with students and parents to provide support through scheduled assistive learning emails and check-in telephone calls during dedicated blocks of time. Through the Chromebook initiative that Lincoln Orens launched several years back, teachers of grades 5-8 utilized tools on the Google platform. Where necessary, the district provided the necessary Chromebooks and Internet access for students for whom this technology was

unavailable at home.

Middle school teachers initiated Google Classroom communications readily and then integrated Google Meet video conferences for purposes of meeting students' social needs as well as to increase engagement through live teaching. Google Meets began for elementary-level students in May. Students with disabilities received services in accordance with their IEPs and in compliance with state education guidance by specialists through telecommunications technology known as teletherapy.

Teachers and students learned together throughout the remote learning experience. Success was aided by students/parents who made use of a "virtual hand raise" message in the subject of their emails to teachers.

In May, Lincoln Orens students took a digital approach to College Week. They completed Naviance assessments for career pathways, took a virtual college tour and had family conversations about college opportunities. Both school librarians kept students engaged with online resources and interactive learning tools. A virtual summer reading challenge will launch beginning Aug. 3 with the district's expanded 1-to-1 electronic device initiative (Chromebook for each student in grades 3-8; iPad for each student in prekindergarten-

grade 2). Devices will be delivered home in time for students to enter the "Summer Reading Race," whereby children are invited to read books of their choice from a variety of databases and log their reading minutes daily through Sept. 8. The goal of the program is for students to earn special recognition upon their return to school.

MILESTONES

The National Junior Honor Society induction ceremony took place virtually on June 2. Congratulations to all new members!



The eighth grade awards night was held virtually on June 11.

Moving up ceremonies took place virtually on June 12 for kindergarten and June 14 for pre-K and grade 4.



The LOMS eighth grade graduation ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Aug. 18.

HONK HONK HOORAY!

The last day of school is typically filled with energy as students and staff members celebrate shared accomplishments together. The pandemic did not hinder the enthusiasm in Island Park on June 15, when a unique send-off lifted spirits and followed health and safety guidelines.

A car parade held outside Lincoln Orens Middle School culminated the 2019-20 school year and allowed all students and their teachers to see each other in person, albeit from a distance. Lincoln Orens and Francis X. Hegarty families honked as they approached and rode past the building in cars decorated

with festive banners and balloons.

Members of the Board of Education, administration, faculty and staff assembled on the field, six feet apart from one another, and held signs and posters. They cheered as the students passed by and waves were exchanged from across the fence.

“The car parade was such an exciting event for all staff, students and parents,” said Hegarty Principal Cynthia Cameron. “It was such a nice way to see my students and wish them a happy and healthy summer vacation. I truly miss their smiles and cannot wait to see them in the fall.”



Staying CONNECTED

The district made every effort to keep the community connection strong during the school closure. Administrators and Board of Education members wrote weekly messages to families. Virtual Spirit Weeks invited students to submit pictures of their participation based on a variety of fun themes, and they had the opportunity to see their classmates and teachers in culminating videos. A ball pass video challenge brought a sense of being together while encouraging play and fitness.

Lincoln Orens held a March Book Madness tournament that promoted reading, while a districtwide Virtual Art Show showcased creativity and enabled students to view their peers' work. Island Park's staff members further bolstered the sense of unity with videos letting students know that they were missed.

Students of the Month recognitions continued during the remote Board of Education meetings and are posted on the district's Facebook page.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

The mental health staff members have provided an array of resources to help students cope with the uncertainty of the pandemic, transition to at-home learning and adjust to the challenges of not seeing their friends. Through the district's website, they offered techniques for time management, self-care, mindfulness and much more. Director of Pupil Personnel Services Dr. Jacob Russum shared information on positive behavioral interventions and supports as a way to help families set routines during times of change. It can be accessed at www.ips.k12.ny.us under News and Announcements.