

## Literacy and Learning: Developing Writers K-12

In an ongoing effort to improve the District's curriculum and align itself with the New York State Common Core Learning Standards, the District has revamped its writing curriculum over the past year. From kindergarten through grade twelve, all levels have begun to implement new units of study, geared to ensure that students are better prepared with the writing skills they need to succeed upon graduation.

At Harley Avenue Primary School, the new writing sequence was developed last year by a curriculum writing team. The program was designed so that children expand upon their writing skills as they move across grade levels. For example, in kindergarten, journal writing is introduced, which may include the students writing words or drawing pictures of personal narratives and dictating their stories to the teacher. At the first-grade level, the students also complete personal narratives, but are encouraged to write in complete sentences and to use proper punctuation, spelling, and grammar. In the second grade, students are asked to use sequencing words when writing their narratives, and are expected to incorporate details into their writing.

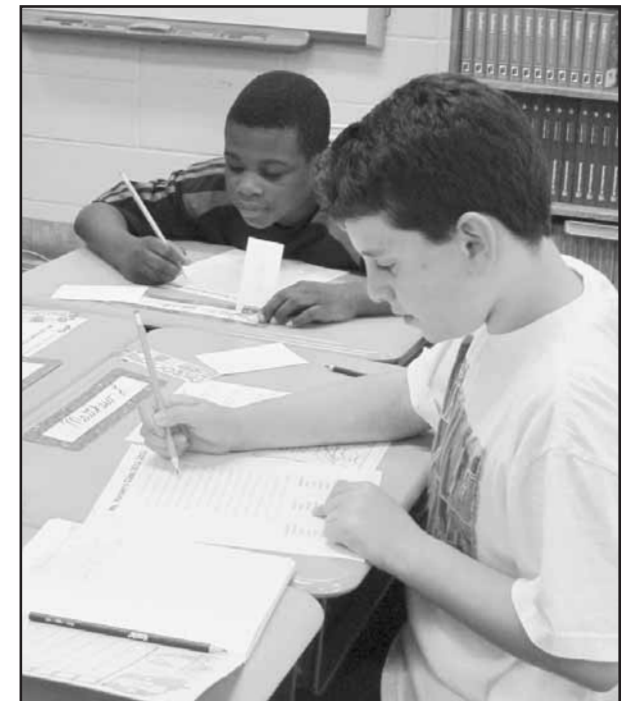
While the personal narratives are just one unit of study at Harley, the other units such as response to

literature, expository writing, and poetry also follow a similar progression. Prior to leaving Harley, second-grade students also begin to write non-fiction reports, incorporating charts and diagrams.

At James H. Boyd Intermediate School, the overall goal is to establish reciprocity between reading and writing. At all grade levels, teachers place an emphasis on non-fiction reading and writing, and students are asked to respond to literature and to write across a variety of genres.

To complement what students learn in the classroom, Boyd routinely hosts author visits and cultural arts programs to emphasize the importance of reading and writing. From "Child's Play," a troupe that acts out skits written by Boyd students, to author Brian Hines, who conducted a writer's workshop for fourth and fifth-grade students, Boyd provides its students with a myriad of opportunities to develop the skill of writing. Principal Pamela Fine states, "Students love meeting and working with authors. These experts serve as mentors to students. It is wonderful to see how excited children become when they learn how a story was developed and the craft the author used to construct the text."

When students enter sixth grade at Elwood Middle School, a large emphasis is placed on ensuring that proper writing takes place across all curricular areas – not just in English class. Students begin to write persuasive essays, informational papers, and compositions that support or defend an idea. Overall, they use critical skills as they write and begin to acquire the skills they will need to compose a full research paper by the time they



are seniors in high school. Also at the middle school level, students begin to incorporate the use of technology into their writing by using Google Docs and Efolio to write collaboratively as a team.

By the time students enter high school, they have a solid writing foundation and are prepared to begin work at a higher level. For the 2011-12 school year, the high school writing curriculum was further adjusted through curriculum mapping to develop specific units by grade level. In addition to studying literature in each grade level, students gradually learn how to write a research paper, including how to properly cite sources and check their work to ensure they are not inadvertently plagiarizing. From writing an informational paper in grade nine to an open-ended research paper in grade twelve, the curriculum continues to be refined to ensure that students are college and career ready upon graduation.

## Budget Workshops

### BUDGET WORKSHOP #4

Thursday, February 16  
Elwood Middle School Auditorium, 7:30 P.M.  
Special Education Budget

### BUDGET WORKSHOP #5

Thursday, March 1  
Elwood Middle School Library, 7:30 P.M.  
Athletics, Transportation & Employee Benefits Budgets

### BUDGET WORKSHOP #6 AND ADOPTION

Thursday, March 29  
Elwood Middle School Auditorium, 7:30 P.M.

**For the latest budget news, please visit the District's website,  
[www.elwood.k12.ny.us](http://www.elwood.k12.ny.us)**

*The 2011-2012 Fall Season was a successful one for the Elwood School District athletic program. The District is thrilled to highlight the achievements of the student-athletes who demonstrate the character, discipline and work ethic of an Elwood-John Glenn Knight.*

## A Winning Season

The Elwood-John H. Glenn High School athletics program has much to be proud of this year. Several of its teams were recognized as Outstanding Sportsmanship Teams for the 2011-2012 Fall Season, including the Girls Varsity Volleyball Team.

Additionally, Girls Varsity Volleyball was named a New York State Scholar-Athlete Team, having collectively maintained a minimum 90 percent grade point average. The team was also named a New York State Tournament Sportsmanship Team and the New York State Champions, the second Glenn "Spiders" State Championship in four years. To date, the volleyball team has won 13 county titles, 11 consecutive Long Island Championships, and five state championships over a nine-year period.

Glenn senior Melissa Rigo was selected as the Most Outstanding Girls Volleyball Player in Suffolk County, an All-State Player, and the Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year, an award chosen by top journalists at ESPN. She is the first in school history to win this prestigious honor.

Melissa and her teammates are not the only ones receiving praise. The John Glenn High School Varsity Football Team, the Knights, won its second consecutive Long Island Championship with a convincing 56-21 victory over Roosevelt. In addition, Glenn was named the number one football school in the tri-state area by MSG Varsity and the Sportswriters Association.

Congratulations to these winning teams for such prestigious recognitions!



## Sign on the Dotted Line!

The Elwood School District would like to congratulate Elwood-John H. Glenn High School senior athletes Nikolas Bellanza (lacrosse), Thomas Forsberg (lacrosse), Sarah Peterson (gymnastics), Melissa Rigo (volleyball) and Maddlyn Sivilli (lacrosse) on signing letters of intent to play at the collegiate level.

In a room full of proud parents, coaches and administrators, students signed their letters. Nick, a lacrosse defenseman, will attend Jacksonville University in Florida. Tom, a midfielder and attackman, will play for the University of Maryland. Sarah will be a member of the gymnastic team at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, while Melissa will play volleyball for The State University of New York at Stony Brook. Maddlyn, a lacrosse midfield defender, will continue her athletic career at Davison College in North Carolina.

"I'm looking forward to the whole experience," said Nikolas. "It will be great to have the opportunity to play Division I athletics." Maddlyn stated that she is "excited to play with athletes from all over the country."

**Congratulations to these five talented student-athletes!**



## Glenn Seniors Selected for State Physical Education Award

Congratulations to Elwood-John H. Glenn High School students Daniel Gibbons and Maddlyn Sivilli on their selection as recipients of the New York State Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NYSAPERD) Suffolk Zone Award. Each year, every high school in Suffolk County recognizes the top male and female physical education students based on the following criteria: physical education achievement, scholastic achievement, outstanding character, physical education class leadership, school-wide and/or community leadership, and positive role modeling.

**Congratulations Daniel and Maddlyn!**



**"It is an honor to be chosen by my teachers out of all of my peers," said Daniel. Maddlyn agreed, saying, "It is nice to know that people notice the hard work you're doing."**

## Board of Education

Joseph Fusaro, President    Dan Ciccone, Vice President  
Andrew L. Kaplan    Bill Gutekunst    Mike LaMena  
Peter Scordo, Superintendent of Schools  
[www.elwood.k12.ny.us](http://www.elwood.k12.ny.us)



Also at the January 19 meeting, Superintendent Peter Scordo presented a draft budget to the Board for the 2012-13 school year. The budget, as presented, represents a tax levy increase of 1.98% and reflects all new curriculum changes. Over the course of the next several months, the Board will review the budget and make any necessary adjustments prior to adopting the spending plan in late March. To view the budget presentation from the meeting, please visit the District's website at [www.elwood.k12.ny.us](http://www.elwood.k12.ny.us) and click on "Budget/Financial Information" under the "News/District Information" tab.

# Board Adopts Curriculum Changes

At its January 19 business meeting, the Elwood Board of Education adopted a set of curriculum changes for the middle and high school levels that take effect with the start of the 2012-13 school year. As presented at the January 5 meeting in detail, the "restructuring" was initiated to align courses with the Common Core Learning Standards and ensure that every student is "Harvard Ready." At the same time, the curriculum changes allow the District to streamline costs in the face of the 2% tax levy cap (see sidebar).

In his presentation in early January, Middle School Principal Dr. Hugh Gigante presented a refined curriculum that not only spoke to the trend in declining projected enrollment for the school, but to how the courses will meet the expectations of the Common Core Standards. Curriculum changes for the sixth grade include:

- *Eliminating "0" period so that students can use the time for additional help and/or services*
- *Integrating library media skills, general music, and computers across the curriculum*
- *Moving performing music into the school day*
- *Refining the ELA/Math structure by adding a development class every other day (students will be placed based on skill strengths and weaknesses) and delaying the accelerated math track until the seventh grade*
- *Moving art and family consumer science to the sixth grade, which will increase the credits from ¼ each to ½*

For the seventh and eighth grades, changes include the addition of a monitored organizational period every other day for those students who do not receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS). Students needing

AIS in more than one subject would receive those services in lieu of either MST or technology for the seventh grade and in lieu of the art/family and consumer science cycle for the eighth grade. Music will remain as an elective and take place during "0" period. In addition, Modern Issues will be eliminated from the eighth-grade curriculum.

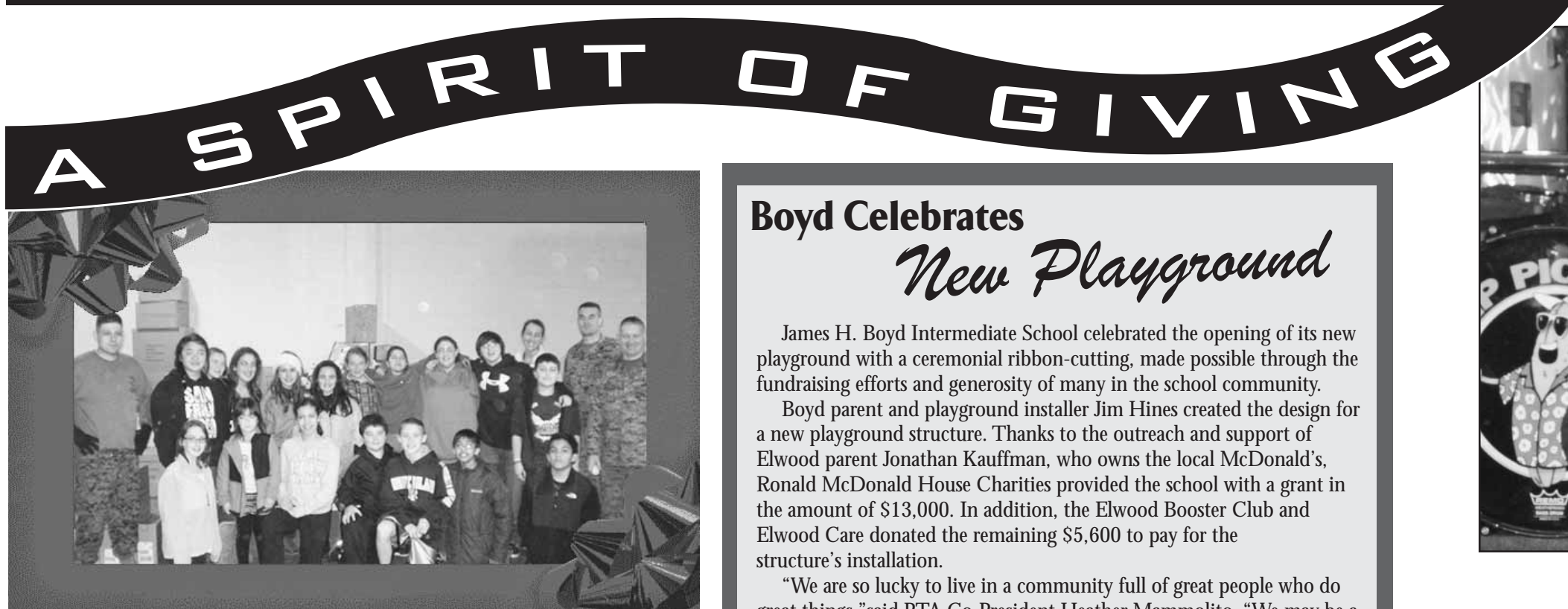
Changes to the high school curriculum were also adopted by the Board of Education. In his address to the Board and community in early January, High School Principal Dr. Vincent Mulieri presented changes that maintain the breadth of the high school program and structure of a comprehensive high school, provide an array of educational options for students, and are fiscally responsible.

Specific changes include a reconfiguration of

the nine-period school day to include a Freshman Seminar for ninth-grade students. The seminar would replace CDOS and health for the freshmen (making CDOS an elective and moving the health requirement to grades 10-12). This seminar would help ninth graders with organizational, learning, technology, and social/emotional skills.

Additional changes at the high school include making Science Research a club with an independent study program and providing more elective options for eleventh and twelfth grades.

To view the curriculum presentations from the January 5 Board meeting in detail, visit the District's website at [www.elwood.k12.ny.us](http://www.elwood.k12.ny.us), click on "Budget/Financial Information" under the "News/District Information" tab, and scroll down to "Budget Workshop #2."



## Unwrapping Smiles

Students of Harley Avenue Primary School and James H. Boyd Intermediate School took part in a toy drive to benefit the John Theissen Children's Foundation of Wantagh. The foundation provides childcare facilities and hospitals with therapeutic and recreational equipment, as well as giving sick and needy children toys throughout the holiday season.

At Elwood Middle School, students were given the opportunity to help the U.S. Marines with their annual Toys for Tots drive. Student volunteers and their parents worked hand-in-hand with Sergeant Michael Umbreit and other Marines at the Toys for Tots warehouse in Farmingdale on December 9. Together, they sorted over 1,000 toys according to age group and gender. This was a unique and enriching event for students and parents alike.

At Elwood-John H. Glenn High School, the Class of 2015 helped to "unwrap smiles" by hosting the Annual Head Start Party. Student volunteers from every grade level, along with faculty members and parents, donated their time and generosity to this wonderful event. Approximately 100 students between the ages of two and five from the Huntington Head Start Program visited the high school for some holiday fun. The children "buddied up" with a high school student for the duration of the party and visited various stations, where they decorated cupcakes, made holiday cards and ornaments, sang songs, and visited with Santa and Mrs. Claus, who provided the children with donated gifts.

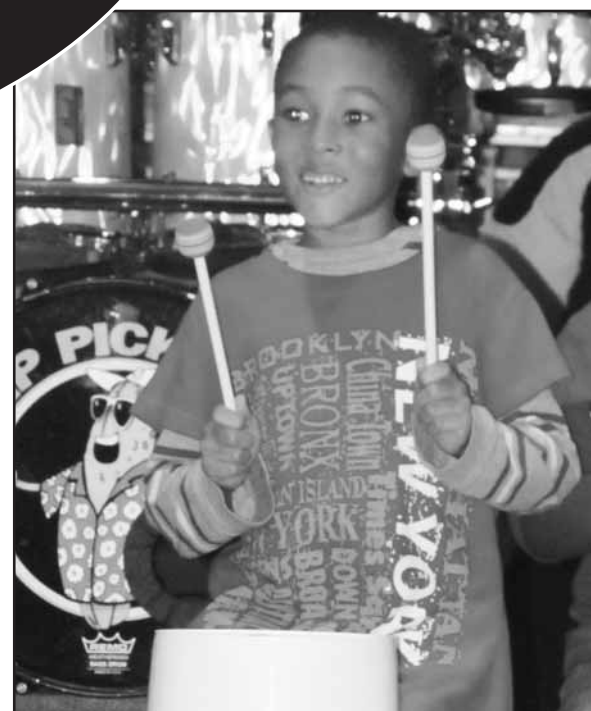
## Boyd Celebrates New Playground

James H. Boyd Intermediate School celebrated the opening of its new playground with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting, made possible through the fundraising efforts and generosity of many in the school community.

Boyd parent and playground installer Jim Hines created the design for a new playground structure. Thanks to the outreach and support of Elwood parent Jonathan Kauffman, who owns the local McDonald's, Ronald McDonald House Charities provided the school with a grant in the amount of \$13,000. In addition, the Elwood Booster Club and Elwood Care donated the remaining \$5,600 to pay for the structure's installation.

"We are so lucky to live in a community full of great people who do great things," said PTA Co-President Heather Mammolito. "We may be a small district, but when we all work together we make big things happen." Board of Education Vice President Dan Ciccone spoke of the play structure as a symbol of "citizenship and selflessness." Superintendent Peter Scordo encouraged students to "live by the example of these community members and take notice of how people make a difference."

Students performed musical selections during the ceremony and offered thanks to all involved in the project. On hand for the ribbon-cutting were Mr. Scordo, Director of School Facilities and Operations Rick Rouse, Principal Pamela Fine, Mr. Ciccone, PTA Co-Presidents Heather Mammolito and Christina Schelin, former principal Sharon McCabe, Jonathan Kauffman and his family, and third and fourth-grade students. The ceremony concluded with a reception inside the school.



## Fifty Years for Glenn

Elwood-John H. Glenn High School celebrated fifty years during the weekend of October 21. To commemorate the anniversary, a panel of graduates from the Class of 1971 returned to speak to eleventh and twelfth-grade students during a roundtable discussion on the topic of career paths.

That evening, Student Council members held a meet-and-greet dinner. Guests included alumni from the last fifty years, as well as retired and current faculty members. On October 22, John Glenn High School hosted an "Alumni 50th Anniversary Fall Festival" featuring games, bounce houses and various fundraising activities.

## Drummin' It Up *with Hip Pickles*

Students of Harley Avenue Primary School enjoyed a special concert performance from the Hip Pickles Drum Band, featuring Chet Doboe and John Frances. Through the interactive exploration of percussion instruments and song, students experienced music with the important message of spreading kindness.



## Glenn Students Become "Natural Helpers"

Approximately 40 students from Elwood-John H. Glenn High School in the Elwood Union Free School District participated in a weekend training session to become Natural Helpers. The Natural Helpers program is based on the premise that students often seek help from their peers before going to an adult.

During the weekend, students participated in a suicide prevention workshop conducted by the Sunshine Prevention Center. The session included a presentation from a young adult who had been through the program. In addition, students worked together to develop a sense of trust and community through small group activities and role-playing exercises that served to strengthen active listening and helping skills.

AROUND THE DISTRICT