



SACHEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Sachem East Girls' Soccer Team: Two-Time Long Island Champs!

The Sachem East girls' soccer team completed its triumphant march to a second straight Long Island title last season with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Massapequa High School. The team had to overcome tough odds to achieve this distinction, having lost 12 valuable seniors who graduated last June. With only five returning seniors – but a strong contingency of 18 juniors, two sophomores and one freshman – the team proved to be a formidable force.

The Flaming Arrows excelled in the classroom as well, earning distinction as a New York State Scholar-Athlete Team for maintaining an overall average of 90 percent or higher throughout the season.

Throughout the season, the team was led by First Team All-State striker Laura Greene, who, with 24 goals and 10 assists, was named Suffolk County Player of the Year by both the Suffolk Girls' Soccer Coaches Association and *Newsday*. The team also featured 16 NYSPHSAA Scholar-Athletes, 10 All-League players and four All-Conference players.



Coach Ralph Forman earned the Association's Suffolk County Coach of the Year title, as well as being named *Newsday's* Coach of the Year for Suffolk. Congratulations to Coach Forman and to every member of the Flaming Arrows on another stellar season!

Proposition to Accept State Funds for Capital Projects: Community Vote on March 11, 2008

Sachem is Eligible for \$5 Million in EXCEL Aid – at No Additional Cost to Taxpayers

As noted in the last issue of this newsletter, Sachem is in a unique position to receive capital projects funding through the state's one-time EXCEL Aid offer. On March 11, the district will propose a \$33,100,000 capital improvement project for much-needed upgrades and replacement of aging structures and equipment. Of that amount, \$24,700,000 will, if the referendum is approved, be funded by state and building aid. An additional \$5,000,000 will be paid for with the state's one-time EXCEL Aid program. The balance, as well as any short-term interest charges, will be paid for with Sachem's existing reserves. As a result, there will be NO ADDITIONAL COST to district taxpayers.

In order to receive the building aid, community members must approve the projects to be funded. A separate EXCEL bond newsletter will be sent to all community members in mid-February, providing a clear explanation of the process, as well as the projects to be funded by EXCEL if the referendum is approved. Please look for this publication and be informed. Mark your calendar to set aside time for this important community decision.

Sachem Central School District

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Superintendent's Conference Day



Composer Maurice Perez visits with Sachem's music staff for a special class in conducting during Superintendent's Conference Day.

Each year, Superintendent's Conference Day provides a valuable opportunity for teachers to join together for a series of informational sessions and workshops, through which they explore the most effective teaching practices in order to improve the educational process for Sachem's students. Feedback after the November conference was overwhelmingly positive from participating building administrators and teachers.

The conference focused on several key areas for professional improvement. Kindergarten teachers worked collaboratively with school speech therapists to review the current curriculum and make revisions based on their teaching practice. Teachers were encouraged to keep detailed notes on the pros and cons of the process so appropriate changes could be made for the 2008-2009 school year.

Kindergarten through second grade teachers attended a training course on computerized grade reporting. Working with staff developers, these teachers learned how to set up students' report cards and record grades through an online program. This technology will enable our teachers to report grades independently from their classrooms, or even from their home computers, making the process more efficient.

All teachers in K-5 received additional training in the Writer's Workshop program, which they had begun earlier this year. The workshop training provides valuable strategies for helping students improve their writing skills. Another session in the Writer's Workshop will be held for teachers in February.

Lastly, grades 3-5 teachers were exposed to the technology component of *Saxon*, a program that aids instruction in the foundational skills of mathematics. This afforded the teachers an opportunity to explore the *Northstar* program, a supplemental online component of the *Saxon* program that will enhance the already strong curriculum used in these grades.

In addition to in-house training and curriculum assessment and development, a number of secondary education departments had the opportunity to attend workshops off campus. Science staff attended a conference at Stony Brook University, while guidance counselors took part in college visitations, and business educators participated in a workshop in downtown Manhattan. A highlight of the conference was a visit from noted composer Maurice Perez, who taught a master class in conducting for the district's music staff.

Space Academy is 'a Go' for Samoset Teacher



Samoset Middle School teacher Alicia Miller knows what it means to reach for the sky – and so do her students, thanks to Ms. Miller's selection in the 2007 Honeywell Educators at Space Academy program. Over 1,000 applicants from 21 different countries applied for the highly selective Honeywell program, which provides sponsorship for middle school teachers to attend training at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Ms. Miller was one of just 265 chosen for the outstanding educational opportunity.

new and innovative techniques for educating students in science and math...

At the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Ms. Miller participated in mission training and simulations with educators from across the world. During the six-day program, she accrued more than 50 hours of professional development training in new and innovative techniques for educating students in science and math. "We took part in an engineering design challenge in heat deflection, created mock-up greenhouses utilized for plant growth on the lunar surface, and played Martian math games. We learned about the retirement of the shuttle program and its replacement, the Ares program, which will eventually carry us to Mars." Other highlights of the experience, says Ms. Miller, included creating a mission patch to represent the diversity and expectations of the group, designing and launching water rockets and assembling engine rockets.

The curriculum also provided real-life astronaut training with space and g-force simulations and space mission scenarios. "My experience is a testament to always striving for your dreams," Ms. Miller says, "You never know what you can do until you try."



Helping Tigers at Lynwood



The Helping Tigers is a nonprofit organization spearheaded by Lynwood Avenue Elementary parents, faculty and staff. The two-fold mission of this group is to teach our children the importance of showing respect for others and taking an active role in supporting the local community. In the fall, Helping Tigers held its first fundraiser at Sayville Ford's Annual Mustang Show. The Tigers grilled hamburgers

and hot dogs and served snacks and drinks to the many visitors, raising over \$1,300 to help the Lynwood community. At Christmas, the Tigers went caroling at the Island Rehabilitation and Nursing Home in Farmingville, bringing cheer to our local senior citizens.

To join future events with the Helping Tigers, be sure to keep your ears perked for upcoming information.

Sachem East Chamber Orchestra: Giving the Gift of Music

The Sachem East Chamber Orchestra had a very exciting season this past fall. Along with a full performance schedule, the students took on opportunities to perform as a way of giving back to the local community. Throughout December, the chamber orchestra performed at the Sunrise Assisted Living residence in Holbrook and the Island Rehabilitation and Nursing Home in Farmingville.

Sachem East anticipates an equally fulfilling 2008 for its chamber orchestra. In May, the students will travel to Philadelphia to perform at three different locations. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is the first stop, where students will participate in a book drive through a program called *Reach Out and Read*. On the second day, orchestra members will play at Independence Mall, just steps from the Liberty Bell. Finally, the orchestra hopes to perform at either a Philadelphia Phillies or Philadelphia Soul (arena football) game on their last day of the trip. The students are very excited, and as always, will represent Sachem with pride.



Advocate for Our Schools! "Let the Governor Know"

Governor Spitzer and our state legislators are working on the school aid formula for the 2008-09 school year, but the current proposal could have a negative impact on the district and taxpayers. Please visit our website at www.sachem.edu for information on how to contact Governor Spitzer and demand that Sachem taxpayers get their fair share of state aid. Let your voice be heard; you can make a difference!



No Ticket Required for Tecumseh Travelers

Third grade students at Tecumseh Elementary School joined in an exciting expedition to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming earlier this school year... through a live Electronic Field Trip (EFT). The virtual outing was one in a series of EFTs offered through Ball State University and made possible with funding from the Best Buy Corporation.

In recent years, EFTs have been taking students everywhere from the Grand Canyon to the Kennedy Space Center. In this EFT, the focus was on the Grand Teton ecosystems and the creatures that inhabit them. Students were treated to live interviews with rangers in the famous national park that features wolves, bears and buffalo among many other animals. The EFT program is a terrific way to use technology to support learning in our schools.

Sachem North Students are up to 'The Challenge'

Five Scholars Win Round One of News 12 Competition



(L to R) Team Sachem North: Ian Hoffman, Sarah Cantatore, David Steinberg and Christopher Chung, victorious at News 12 Challenge. Not pictured are alternate Jaclyn Wilson and faculty advisors Corinne McMahon and Richard Schaentzler.

A throng of students, parents and faculty recently hopped a train to New York City's Penn Station to cheer on some of Sachem North's best and brightest as they participated in the first round of News 12's academic TV quiz show, *The Challenge*, taking the lead over Shoreham-Wading River opponents.

Filed in midtown Manhattan, *The Challenge* tests Long Island high school students' knowledge of history, arts and literature, science and math. Donning the traditional Sachem North colors of black and gold, seniors David Steinberg (team captain), Sarah Cantatore and Christopher Chung, and juniors Ian Hoffman and Jaclyn Wilson, went head-to-head with the squad from Shoreham-Wading River High School for three exciting rounds: multiple choice, the lightning round and free response.

Team advisors Corinne McMahon and Richard Schaentzler worked diligently for over a month to prepare the team for the big day. "We've worked so hard and have honed our trivia skills. I am confident that we are more than adequately prepared and will come out on top," McMahon said.

"This is truly an amazing experience," Ian Hoffman said after the taping. "It represents a perfect opportunity for Sachem to show its academic talents. I hope to do this again in the future."

Sachem North's appearance on *The Challenge* aired Saturday and Sunday, January 26 and 27 on News 12 – Long Island. The team will compete in Round Two on February 29.

Celebrating Our Diversity

In November, families of ESL students were invited to Nokomis Elementary School to celebrate the diversity of cultures represented in Sachem schools. Agostino Arts engaged our students and families in multicultural storytelling and face painting.



Family Connection from Naviance

Family Connection is a web-based service that assists students and families with the stressful college planning process. It allows students and parents to utilize a great deal of information about colleges and universities, right from home. To access this service from your computer, go to <http://connection.naviance.com/sachemnorth> or <http://connection.naviance.com/sachemeast>. Using the website, you can access schedules for college visits, scholarship details and applications, and data that compares your GPA and test scores with actual students who have applied to colleges you're considering.

Sachem Central School District is very excited about Family Connection's arrival, and hopes that parents and students find this new service helpful.

Once you have created an account, you can:

- Use deadline dates and stay organized
- Get important email updates from your high school counseling office
- Search and obtain information about programs, contact names and requirements
- Review college visit schedules
- Enter colleges you are considering and see where you stand compared to previous applicants
- Identify scholarship opportunities for which you qualify
- Review "scattergrams" of college acceptances with SAT and ACT information

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten Registration will be held from February 4 through March 31 for the 2008-2009 school year. This will take place at the Central Registration Office located at the Administrative Annex, 51 School Street, Lake Ronkonkoma. Registration hours are 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 pm. Please refer to the schedule for your child's home school. Additional information can be found on the Sachem website at sachem.edu or you may call the Central Registration Office at 471-7861.

Cayuga and Chippewa	February 4-8
Gatlot and Grundy	February 11-15
Hiawatha and Lynwood	February 25-29
Merrimac and Nokomis	March 3-7
Tamarac and Tecumseh	March 10-14
Waverly and Wenonah	March 25-31

Autism Program Evaluation

In an effort to better serve our students, the Sachem School District recently worked with Long Island Developmental Consulting to complete an evaluation of the district's Autism Program. All residents are invited to view this evaluation on the district's website under the Office of Student Services at <http://www.sachem.edu/dept/student/>.