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It is a big deal. I got a one-word text message from my son this past week – “passed.” I told my wife, called Grandma and Grandpa; we were all so happy! The message was about a test he had taken, and it was welcome news to us, something to celebrate. There would be no public announcement, no picture in the paper. This was just an item shared among family members as part of our daily “comings and goings,” but for us it was a big deal.

So I got to thinking about how many events happen in each of our lives almost every day that are a “big deal” to us, but may not be well known by others ...there are a lot! From the earliest news of the first day of school, to making a new friend, to learning something new, to becoming

part of a club or team, I suspect your lists are as long as mine. That said, I am reminded of the role and importance of family and community in all of this; indeed of the many interactions we all have. In each of our own ways, any time we can “make a big deal” and recognize the accomplishments of our children and of others, we provide much more help and support to them in ultimately achieving these goals and other accomplishments! “You made it through a tough day – good job!” “Homework looks good – nice work!” “How was practice? – well done!” “I saw how you helped that person – thanks.” These interactions that we all have are really important in the positive foundations we build for our youngsters. Keep it up over the years, I believe, and the cumulative effect of this recognition is a powerful force in

the confidence, self respect and character development that we can see in our children and in our entire community. We celebrate each of our children – I believe all of us are a part of that effort.

With the school year now fully underway, the Board of Education continues its focus on our mission this year, “to celebrate our students’ uniqueness and maximize their ability to attain excellence as we guide and prepare them to become responsible citizens of the world.” As always, I invite all members of the community to join us at our monthly meetings (posted on the district website and in the East Islip Library) to come hear the business of the school district and to volunteer your time and efforts to make our towns all we want them to be. It is a big deal!

Thank you for letting me serve as a member of the School Board.

Superintendent's Message

At a workshop recently, the presenter spoke about what it takes to be a hero and how to build the courage to be the best. He stated that attitude and action were the keys to being a hero. He asked the audience to think of all the things that they were grateful for. I thought about that question and realized that I am grateful for the chance to work in East Islip, grateful for the wonderful things I have seen teachers doing in classrooms, grateful for the energy and enthusiasm of our students, grateful for the caring and

concern of our administrators, grateful for the support of our parents and community, and grateful for the time and thoughtful planning done by our School Board.

The presenter shared that it is the attitude of thinking of the positive that allows the hero to feel that action can change a situation. He then talked about the need for action. Heroes act while others cannot or will not. The Board of Education has acted to form a strategic planning committee that will develop a three- to five-year plan for our district. This committee will gather insights from our community members to help inform the

direction we want our district to go in. This is important work that will serve to guide our work for the next several years. It will be a living document that will allow us to make course corrections over time, but set the direction firmly. It will also serve as the basis for the goals and objectives that we will develop each year and that will be monitored as we measure how well we are progressing towards our vision.

This is about looking at what we are doing, finding things we are grateful for, building the desire for making things better for all our children, and going into action to get it done. Are you the hero we need to be our best? Join us in working for our children and their futures.

District Welcomes New Director of Athletics

Stephen Restivo joins the East Islip administration as the district's new Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics. He comes to us from Three Village Central School District, where he served as Department Chairperson for Physical Education, Health and Athletics. With more than 12 years of education experience, he has also worked in the Middle Country Central School District. Mr. Restivo earned his Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from the University of Rhode Island, and his Master's degree and Certificate in School District Administration from SUNY Stony Brook.

Familiar Faces in New Positions

Dr. Lisa Belz Principal of Early Childhood Center

Dr. Lisa Belz returns this year to the Early Childhood Center, where she began as Principal when she joined East Islip in 2004. With more than 20 years of education experience, Dr. Belz worked as a classroom teacher for 14 years in the South Country and Brentwood School Districts, as well as an assistant principal in the William Floyd Elementary School. She earned her Bachelor of Arts at Dowling College, her Master of Arts from SUNY Stony Brook, her Professional Diploma from Dowling College, and her Doctorate in Education from St. John's University. Dr. Belz has also served as a Board of Education trustee in the Bayport-Blue Point School District.

Deborah Smith Principal of Connetquot Elementary School

Currently in her 14th year with the district, Deborah Y. Smith began the 2010-11 school year in her new role as Principal of Connetquot Elementary School. Since 2005, Ms. Smith has been the district's Director of Humanities K-12, overseeing the curriculum and instruction in English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies. During her tenure, the district adopted the Balanced Literacy Framework and coordinated the interdisciplinary Environment Green Career Academy program. Ms. Smith has also served as Interim Assistant Principal at both the Middle School and the High School and was a teacher in the district for seven years. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Theater from SUNY Binghamton, her Master of Science in Elementary Education from Dowling College, and her Professional Diploma in Educational Leadership from Dowling College. She is currently in the Doctoral Program for Foundations, Leadership and Policy Studies at Hofstra University.

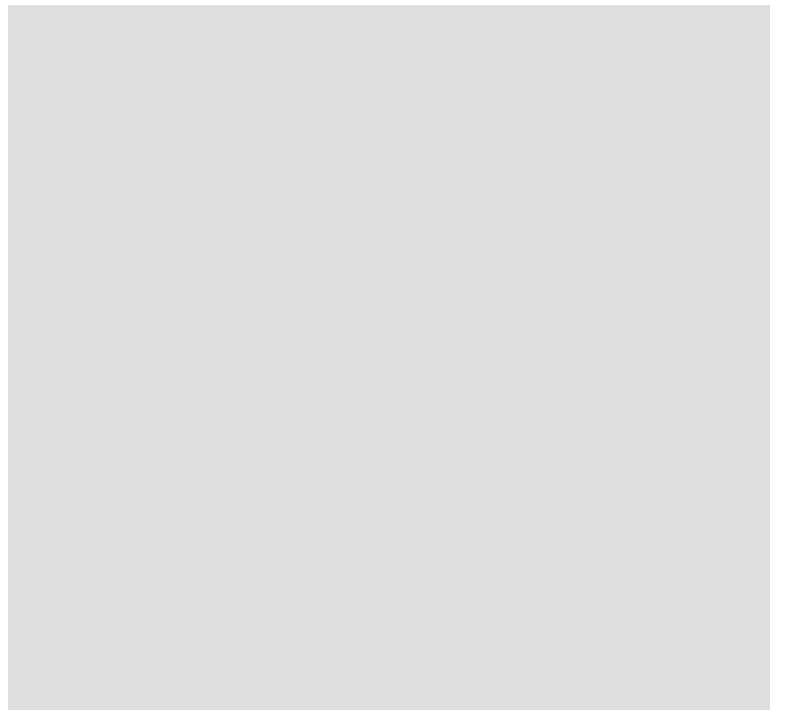
Stephen G. Guarino Director of Art & Music

Stephen G. Guarino joins the administrative staff after a 24-year tenure as a choral director and musical theater teacher with the district. He graduated from the Crane School of Music at Potsdam College in 1986 and began his career in the East Islip School District. He received his Master's Degree from SUNY Stony Brook and his School Building Leader and School District Leader certificates from Dowling College. Mr. Guarino has been a member of the Suffolk County Music Educator's Association and served as their treasurer for three years. In addition to his teaching experience, Mr. Guarino has performed in regional theater productions and most recently designed scenery for "Thoroughly Modern Millie" at the Bayway Arts Center.

He has chaired and co-chaired many All-County Choruses and was the rehearsal accompanist as well as co-conductor for the première season of the LIGMC in 2009.

FTK Foundation Hosts 14th Carnival

The East Islip For The Kids (FTK) foundation recently held its 14th Annual Carnival to raise funds in support of academic, cultural, and recreational programs for East Islip School District students. Despite a rainy start, the carnival kicked off on Friday, October 1 with a nice showing of support. The carnival began with a grand opening ceremony, which included numbers from



Prior to the start of the school year, each of the elementary schools in the district held a First Grade Orientation for parents and their incoming first graders. The orientation helps students make a smoother transition from the Early Childhood Center by acclimating first graders to their new teacher and new environment before

that sometimes-overwhelming first day.

During the hour-long program, parents and their children met all of the first-grade teachers and the principal at their respective elementary school building.

After introductions, children were taken to see their new classrooms while parents remained behind to review the school policies and expectations for students.

In the classroom, students had an opportunity to introduce themselves to the class, learn about their new teacher, and ask any questions they may have had. Classes reviewed their upcoming schedule and devised a seating arrangement; eliminating any 'surprises' a student may encounter on the first day. Following the classroom visits, students reunited with their parents and toured the building.

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