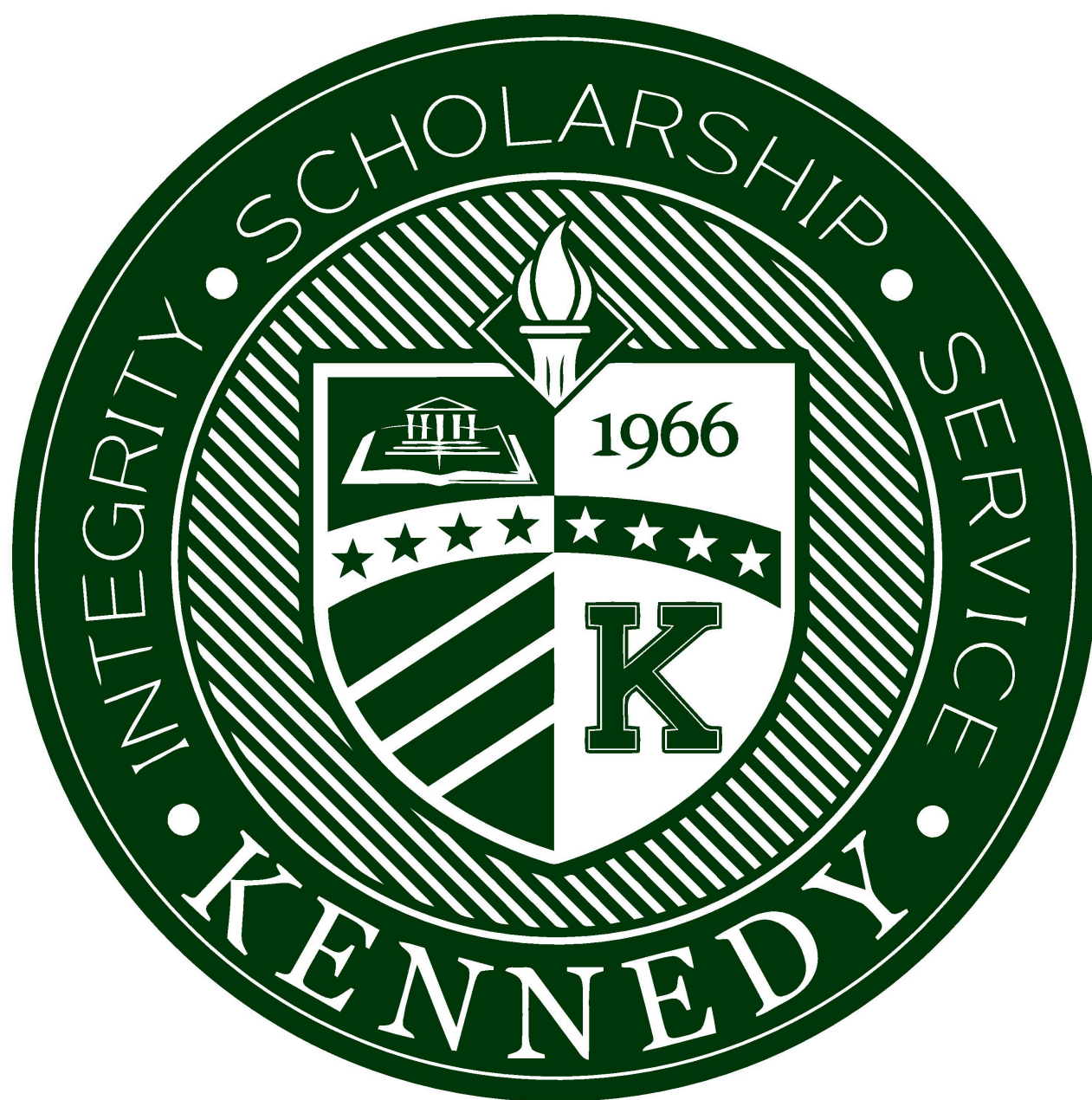


A History of John F. Kennedy High School

The First 50 Years



Written by
the Students of *Uncovering the Past*
at John F. Kennedy High School

Edited by Dennis Urban
Forward by Lorraine Poppe

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Works cited for all student essays can be accessed at
<http://uncoveringthepast.weebly.com/history-of-jfkhs.html>.

Forward

John F. Kennedy High School Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary

John F. Kennedy High School opened its doors on September 7, 1966, with a total of 1018 students – 436 juniors and 582 sophomores. The district principal, Dr. Julius C. Braun, welcomed the students and spoke about the journey they were beginning – they were “contributing to the history-making traditions of a new school.” The entire student body voted to name the Cougar as the school’s mascot and nickname. Soon thereafter, the school newspaper staff chose to name their paper the *Cougar Crier*, “An impressive name to herald and announce the news and features of our school.”

50 years later, many traditions remain. Many clubs and sports continue to uphold the traditions that were started in 1966. In the first edition of the *Cougar Crier*, the student government vice-president encouraged girls to get involved in the

school, saying, “Some girls do not realize the opportunity available in participating in high school activities and in being as much a part of the school as boys.” She recommended that girls get involved. In 50 years, so many things have also changed!

Opportunities have increased for all students; we offer so many more curricular choices and school activities that allow students to follow their passions. Our school community has continued to support facility upgrades, so our students have the best possible learning environment. As stated in the Cornerstone Laying Dedication, our school will “meet the needs of our youth of today and tomorrow.” This was true “yesterday” and remains true today.

Kennedy High School has a history of excellence; the most recent tributes are seen in the plaques that adorn our halls, with Kennedy ranked amongst the “Best,” “Most Challenging,” and “Top” schools in

the country. We take great pride in an extremely strong and caring faculty that prepares and challenges our students for the future. That is our strong tradition.

The research and oral histories you will read will give you a picture of the educational program, as well as the social and political times that shaped the students. You are now also part of Kennedy's history; your footprints will help students of the future understand high school life today. I applaud the work that Dr. Dennis Urban's students have accomplished; I hope it was an incredible learning experience. To those perusing these pages, may this glimpse into history be educational and enjoyable. The Kennedy traditions continue!

Lorraine Poppe, Principal

PART 1 - CONTEXT

1

The Importance of a Name

Brian Zharov



Former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli said, “The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example.” Accordingly, Disraeli raises the question:

How significant is a name, and what can a name really show? Both the former and the latter can be answered through analyzing the name of John F. Kennedy High School. Indeed, it is imperative to

understand the school's name, as it has reflected the school's ideals ever since its nascence. After 50 years, moreover, the school's name has not lost its original meaning. Through its namesake, John F. Kennedy High School yearns to spread President Kennedy's legacy of commitment, egalitarianism, and accord within each of its students, thus engendering students who, like President Kennedy, hope to make a difference in the world.

Starting during the 1950s "Era of Affluence and Conformity," many Americans were moving from the cities to the suburbs; consequently, there was an increasing in demands for new schools. The post-World War II era, with the emergence of the Cold War, brought a myriad of changes to American life concerning not only American foreign policy and the economy, but also American domestic social life. The nation's hostile posture toward communism abroad was complemented by equally strong attacks on suspected communists attacks. As a result of this fearful and hostile atmosphere, Americans feared any anomalies; therefore, people only desired to live in the safe "American bubble" of conformity. This conformity resulted in the rise of the suburbia.

Additionally, as many men came home

from fighting overseas, the nation's birth rate soared, resulting in this postwar baby boom. Population booms occurred in the Merrick-Bellmore area starting in the mid 1950's. As members of the "baby boom generation" became teenagers, the demand for high schools increased; Sanford H. Calhoun was established in 1958, and the first class graduated in 1960. By 1962, the population boom continued, houses south of Merrick Road were being constructed, and neighborhoods were forming; as a result, several elementary schools were constructed, as well as a new high school, which, ultimately, became John F. Kennedy High School.

John F. Kennedy High School was named after President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States from January 1961 until his assassination in November 1963. During the 1960 election, the Democrats nominated Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, a young, handsome, and Roman Catholic man. His being 43 years old suggested a sense of naïveté and inexperience to the American public: if elected, Kennedy would be the youngest person ever elected President. Nevertheless, Kennedy dissipated enduring reservations about his age during

the first ever series of nationally televised presidential debates, in which Kennedy exuded a sense of poise, confidence, and professionalism. Furthermore, many were hesitant to vote for Kennedy due to his religion. Seeing his religion a possible thwart to his election, Kennedy dealt with this in a speech to a group of Protestant ministers in Houston, Texas, where he said, “I am not a Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party’s candidate for President who happens to be a Catholic.” Kennedy’s rhetoric, character, and ideals allow for his, though narrow, victory. The election of John F. Kennedy in 1961 ushered the beginning of a new liberal resurgence in American politics and culture: as the first President born in the twentieth century, John F. Kennedy announced that “the torch has passed to a new generation of Americans,” as Dwight Eisenhower, then the oldest man ever to serve as President, sat behind him. With Kennedy’s youthful and lively allure, the new President and First Lady of the United States reminded many of a modern-day Camelot, the mythical court of King Arthur, ergo illustrating that Kennedy, right from his inauguration, articulated and appealed a sense of hope and rejuvenation.

Though Kennedy’s actions regarding foreign policy were quite vital, his real legacy is noted regarding his character and what he stood for. On October 14, 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy went to the University of Michigan to speak to a crowd of 10,000 students, where he asked, “How many of you, who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world?” In response, 1,000 students signed a petition, agreeing to go abroad. Thus, Kennedy’s “challenge to these students—to live and work in developing countries around the world” and “to dedicate themselves to the cause of peace and development” served as the impetus to the development of the Peace Corps. On March 1, 1961, President Kennedy issued an executive order creating the Peace Corps, a group of trained American men and women who used their skills to help numerous developing nations. Thousands of Americans volunteered to help fight starvation, disease, and illiteracy by working, through training, as agricultural agents, nurses, and teachers. From this, additionally, the Peace Corps program became a symbol of American idealism and liberality, which ties back to and

mirrors President Kennedy's desire for equality, peace, and freedom.

Furthermore, his actions regarding the Civil Rights Movement, too, reflect his passion toward parity. After much protest and mounting public outrage - whether it be the "Freedom Riders" or Birmingham demonstrations--President Kennedy knew he had to act. First, he decided to address the nation, as a whole, on June 11, 1963. In this televised address, Kennedy underscored America was founded on the ideal that "all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened." As Kennedy continued, he explained: "Today we are committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free. When Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only. It ought to be possible, therefore... for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated, as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case today." Here, evidently, Kennedy calls to attention the racial disparity to which American society has endured to succumb. Eight days after this speech, Kennedy moved his attention toward

Congress to pass a civil rights bill that would forbid segregation in public places, hurry up school integration, and forbid discrimination in hiring practices. Other actions to which he was committed and tie to his desire for equality and inclusion include: the desire for global peace and democracy; art and culture (of which he realized the important for the president to exhibit an esteem and gratitude of cultural and intellectual excellence); religious equality; and bringing attention about intellectual disabilities.

Unfortunately, President Kennedy was assassinated on November 21, 1963, causing sadness and grief among both Americans and foreigners. Thurston Clarke, a historian, author, and scholar, during a speech, discussed the effect of Kennedy's assassination on not only America but also the world. He explained that the University of Chicago's survey after President Kennedy's death showed 53% of Americans mourned him as if he were a family member. Israeli Statesman Abba Eban had said that Kennedy's assassination was "one of the most authentically tragic events in the history of nations." Ms. Lorraine Poppe, John F. Kennedy High School's current Principal, like many other Americans living through the 1960s, recalls President Kennedy's

assassination. Though young, Poppe remembers her parents and grandmother talking about it in such shock and disbelief: the whole idea of what he stood for and the fact that someone could kill a President, Poppe explains, was so “mind-boggling”; she and the rest of her family members were “spellbound” by such a catastrophic event.

With grief and disbelief eminent following Kennedy’s death, many cities, towns, and states decided to commemorate Kennedy, his character, and his legacy; one town, Bellmore, decided to do the same with John F. Kennedy High School. Tied to this immense despondency, throughout the nation, roads, bridges, and schools were being named in honor of the late President. Currently, there are more than 100 named after President John F. Kennedy. With so many roads, bridges, and schools named after Kennedy, it ties to the effect Kennedy had, and continues to have, on the American public: it’s not a political effect; rather, it is a more intellectual effect regarding his characteristics that were conveyed through his actions. When John F. Kennedy High School was first established, its 1967 yearbook explains that when President Kennedy was assassinated, the nation lost a man of

“physical discipline, intellectual acuity, and unquestionable ability.” Additionally, in 1966, then President of the Central High School District Three Board of Education John Martin explained that, with this school’s name, President Kennedy’s “spirit of vigor and enthusiasm and hope for a better America and a better world” will spread and shine through the students at Kennedy High School. With these traits, John F. Kennedy High School was established on the basis of President Kennedy’s character, and it continues to hold these vital standards along with a sense of accomplishment for every one of its students.

Thus, President Kennedy’s character and legacy live in within the walls of John F. Kennedy High School. Principal Lorraine Poppe believes that what she admires most throughout her over two decades at Kennedy High School is the widening of curriculums, a “change in principle” that all students should have opportunities to succeed. Through many updates and changes to curriculums, this not only allows students to focus on major subjects, but also opens doors and opportunities to focus on other interests, such as on the arts, culinary education, engineering programs, etc. As society is continuing to evolve, it creates

“rejuvenation with opportunity,” with such a wide array of programs. This high school’s inclusive curriculum ties to Kennedy’s desire for equality: there’s no discrimination; yet, Kennedy valued education, which this school cultivates through a plethora of Advanced Placement classes, career-oriented classes, etc. Furthermore, another one of Poppe’s biggest highlights at Kennedy High School is the increase in community service--specifically, the desire to get kids to understand the importance of helping others and where they live: “We’ve really pushed that more and more not just through graduation requirements, but also through clubs...” Through this commitment, likewise, community service is “not just a student’s donating \$20”; instead, it is the actual service tied to giving more time and effort to help those who are less fortunate than the students are. Through Kennedy High School’s promise for community service, there is a correlation between President Kennedy’s Peace Corps--in particular, his desire to give back to people’s communities- and the school’s desire for community service opportunities. Ms. Poppe explains that the school has focused on his quote, “Ask not what you can do for your country; ask what you can do for your country,” with regard to its local communities, such as

opening up a food pantry at the Central Office, and national/international communities, such as donating time, money, and effort with “Adopt a Battalion,” a volunteer-based organization that helps collect and send care packages to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and to wounded and disadvantaged war veterans and their families. Ms. Poppe admires how many students come to her with community service ideas; she believes that their ideas can “blossom into wonderful and creative things,” therefore carrying on Kennedy’s legacy of helping others.

Additionally, John F. Kennedy High School has President Kennedy’s love for the arts world, which ties to the Kennedy “Camelot” image. This can be noted, among other things, through the school’s arts programs, which tie to diversity, acceptance, and unity. Lastly, Poppe believes that the importance of human rights/civil rights at John F. Kennedy High School really mirror President Kennedy’s principles toward parity: “We hope that Kennedy High School is a place that people feel safe, safe to voice your opinion, safe where you can be whatever you want to be, and feel comfortable and other people will accept you”; hence, Poppe explains, the school’s mission is to foster a strong sense of community at

Kennedy High School where there is acceptance and tolerance.

It is important to understand a school's namesake in order to preserve the legacy.

In accordance with this notion, former 5th grade in New York City's South Bronx at P.S. 277 Robert Pondiscio requested for every school in America named after someone famous--whether it be a "president, military figure, athlete, civic leader, or any prominent person"--to focus on the "life and work" of the school's namesake. He urges for students to research and write about the person. The most important part, Pondiscio stresses, is to let students "drive the debate" for this can be a quite vital lesson in civics, history, and community understanding and appreciation. John F. Kennedy High School, just like Mr. Pondiscio preached, has done this. One such time was in 2013. In 2013, Participation in Government teachers Lisa Scherer and Brian Seidman decided to, with their classes, commemorate President Kennedy in light of the 50th anniversary of his assassination. First, they volunteered on November 23, 2013, with the New York Says Thank You Foundation to help reconstruct a New York City firefighter's Massapequa home, which Hurricane Sandy destroyed. This project intertwines

with President Kennedy's passion toward community service and helping the world. Additionally, throughout the week of the anniversary, the school's morning announcement shared a President Kennedy quote about service, community, or government, in hopes to not only underscore President Kennedy's ideals, but also influence the students with Kennedy's principles. Additionally, these students created a "memory board" composed of newspaper and magazine articles and pictures connected to President Kennedy.

Ultimately, John F. Kennedy High School wishes to nurture students who encapsulate Kennedy's character and carry on his legacy. In its hallway, Kennedy High School has its "Hall of Fame" of notable alumni and their accomplishments. A plethora of these alumni graduated from top schools such as Princeton, Oxford, Yale, University of Pennsylvania, etc., which ties to the high school's push toward rigorous yet rewarding courses. Likewise, all of these alumni have contributed to their communities and have become quite successful through their embodying the "visionary spirit" of Kennedy regarding community service, education, and dedication, which the Kennedy High School desires to foster in

every one of its students. For example, an alumnus who epitomizes President Kennedy's commitment to education is Lawrence Steinberg, class of 1975. As an attorney, he focuses on business proceedings and gives legal representation to the homeless in Los Angeles. Ergo, Steinberg's plaque on Kennedy's "Hall of Fame" serves as a representation of the correlation between education and success in the world and helping others. There are other notable alumni, however, who show that a student doesn't necessarily need to go to an Ivy League school to make a difference in the world. Alumna Susan Katz Holland, class of 1969, graduated from Bowling Green State University in 1973, and is a retired special education teacher who served the Bellmore-Merrick School District for 35 years. As her plaque explains: "As a tireless advocate for students with special needs and as a recognized leader in her field, Susan Katz Holland embodies the visionary spirit of President John F. Kennedy." Additionally, President Kennedy expressed earnest commitment toward the importance of serving the nation was; an alumnus who epitomizes this is George Manaskie, Class of 1973, who was recognized for his service in the Navy. Just a couple of his many accomplishments include graduating from the U.S. Naval

Academy in 1977 and being chosen to join the submarine nuclear propulsion program. These 3 alumni are only a few of dozen Kennedy alumni who--whether it is through helping those in need, serving the nation, or becoming an influence in society--have created a difference in the world, a desire that President Kennedy had, and what John F. Kennedy High School strives to cultivate within its students.

John F. Kennedy High School's name is a beacon of President Kennedy's legacy. With this name, moreover, the school "inherits" a "great example" of a man after whom the school wishes to cultivate within its students. Whether it is President Kennedy's poise during his presidential campaign, or his commitment toward global democracy, civil rights, the arts, etc., his true legacy is exemplified through these actions. As the school's 1967 yearbook explains, President Kennedy's death was premature; as a result, it is up to the "youth of our nation living according to the standards and ideals" to finish what Kennedy began: it is the duty of students across the nation to learn in school, to learn academically as well as intellectually, and, indeed, there is a difference. It is up to the youth of America to cause a change in the world. Through this promise, John F.

Kennedy High School dedicated its cornerstone to President Kennedy, as a reminder of why it was named as it was; this cornerstone will serve in permanency as the symbol of the school, a symbol tied to President Kennedy's character and legacy. After 50 years, John F. Kennedy High School continues to serve as a microcosm of educational rejuvenation, equality, and commitment, all in hopes to enrich and beget its young minds to leave the school with the mindset of similar propensity and readiness, to which President Kennedy held, to make their mark on the world.

2

The Anti-Vietnam War Movement in the Bellmore-Merrick Community

Sydney Root



The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of rebellion and change for the United States. Between the Vietnam War and the growing mistrust of the government, Americans were furious. The antiwar

movement rapidly grew throughout the country, especially on Long Island. Americans showed their frustrations and anger in many ways, including through protest and demonstrations. Throughout

Long Island, there was a strong feeling of unrest as the war raged on, and some of these anti war feelings even spread high schools. In the Bellmore-Merrick Central High school district, students expressed their frustrations in many peaceful ways. The antiwar movement changed the culture of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District by creating a more open environment to discuss and debate issues about the war and international conflicts.

The Vietnam War began on November 1, 1955, and officially ended on April 30, 1975. America and Russia were at the heat of the Cold War, and America wanted to stop the spread of communism, by preventing the domino theory. Because of this, the Vietnam War was considered a proxy war. Many Americans felt the war was unjust and wanted to end the war. These people were known as “doves,” since they promoted the idea of peace, and they included many young people who saw their peers going off to war. Many people, however, did support the war because they believed the government sent Americans to war for important reasons. The Vietnam War sparked conflicts and values that have never been seen in American culture before.

The war affected the daily life of the American people in many ways. I spoke to Mr. Zuccherro, a current teacher in Bellmore, John F. Kennedy High School, and former resident of the Bellmore-Merrick community, who explained that the war was everywhere. It was everything people saw on television at night as well as in the newspapers. During this time, there was truly not filter with the media and everything from gory war scenes to distressed pictures were seen on the television. This made the war part of everyday life. Also, the draft made the war more in touch with society. Because of it, the draft made a nonmilitary community, like Bellmore-Merrick, into a community that was actively seen protesting and getting involved with the war. It made an average high school kid who never thought about joining the military and fighting overseas nervous over the war. It made parents and teachers think about the kids in their life who could potentially be defending the country. A community like the Bellmore-Merrick one would never think about something like this if it was not for the Vietnam War. People who would never think about the war or government were now seen protesting on street corners and expressing their emotions in ways they never did before. The war affected the daily life of the American

people, especially in the Bellmore-Merrick community.

National government, as well as the local government, played an impact on how people felt and reacted towards the war in general. Many viewed the national government as being opposed to the views of the people. They saw the government as pro war and not for the interest of the common people. This was not what the people wanted and, therefore, they protested. By 1966, the people of America viewed the war as the most pressing national problem, and Washington needed to do something about that fast. With the numbers of antiwar movements on the rise, the people were becoming more angry by the day, and began to blame the government. In the Bellmore-Merrick community, government played a major role in how people reacted towards the war. In 1969, a teen demonstration was held in Wantagh, New York. The students did not agree with the voting age, which was still 21, but the government felt that they could send the kids off to war, with no say, since the draft age was 18.

One way the anti-Vietnam War movement was shown, was on college campuses. College campuses where a tremendous

stage for the antiwar movement, and the spotlight definitely shown on them. Even in the Bellmore-Merrick community, students in high school played a role in protesting around the college life. The draft played a major role in the war, and was a big part of the antiwar movement. The draft was needed because of the growing size and length of the war. All men, at the age of 18, had to enter the draft. In the class of 1976, Kennedy High was lucky enough to have two students who were accepted to the prestigious Harvard University. Because of their acceptance and attendance to the school in the fall, they were exempted from entering the draft. To protest the draft, both students decided to wear sneakers to graduation. The draft played an influential role in the antiwar movement.

In the late 1960s, the Tinker v. Des Moines Supreme Court case rocked the country, and upheld the rights of students to protest in schools, provided these protests did not interrupt the educational process. In the Bellmore-Merrick community, students were peaceful protesting the war on school grounds. Students throughout the district could be seen wearing black armbands to school, just like in the Tinker case. People were outraged with these actions, since students had never

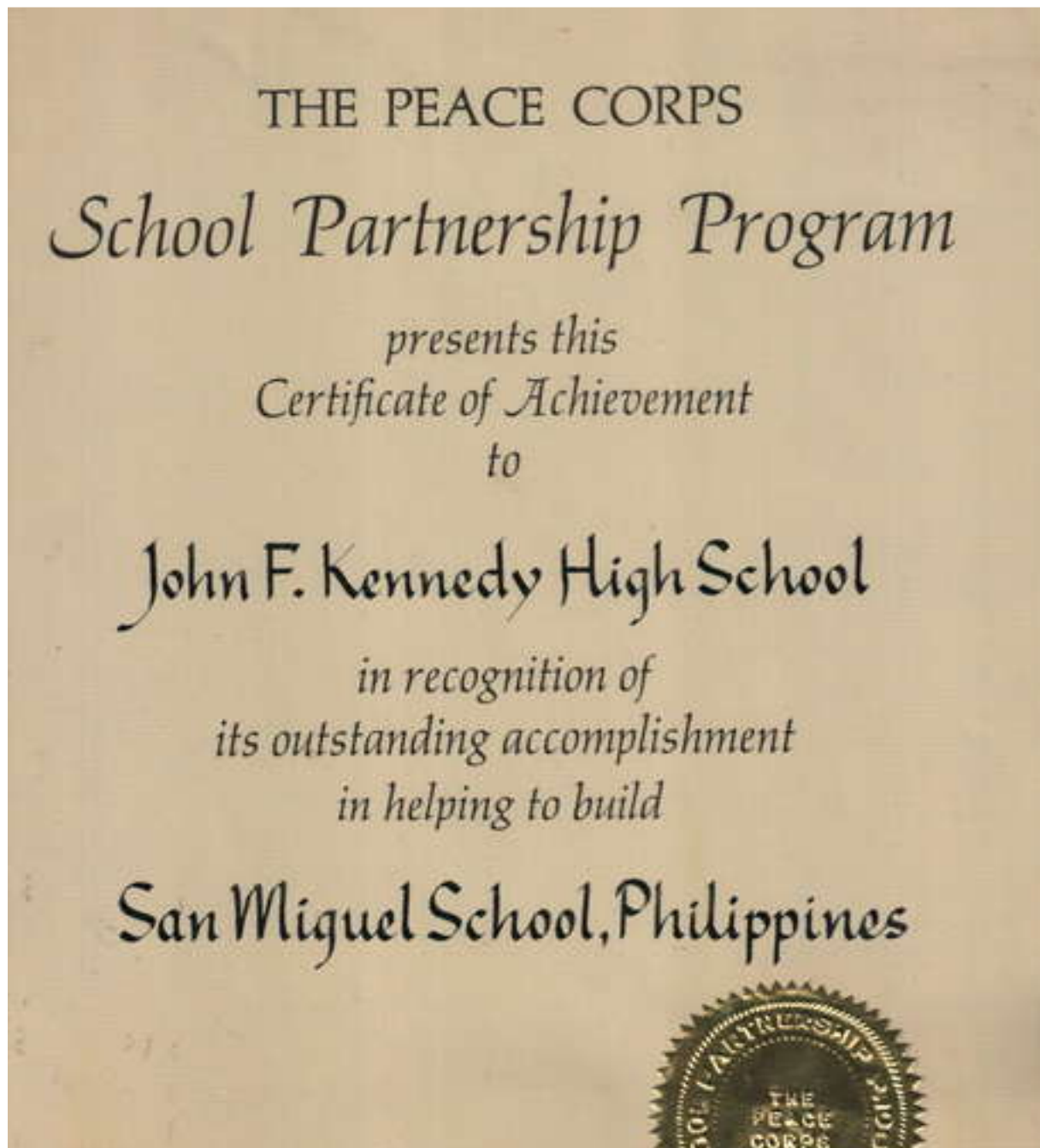
expressed emotions like this before. Administration did not know how to reprimand students in situations like this. Then, in April of 1972, a group of around 200 students protested the war at Mepham High School. Many students were reprimanded for their actions regarding this protest. Issues with protesting were even occurring, and were on the rise in the middle schools.

The Vietnam War affected the Bellmore-Merrick community in many ways. It played an influence on the community like no war has ever played before. Between the draft, the government impact, and protests, the country, as well as the community was shaped and changed forever. People became more comfortable about expressing their feelings about the war. The antiwar movement changed the culture of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District by creating a more open environment for issues about the war and conflicts about international debate.

3

The Impact of The Civil Rights Movement On Student Activism at John F. Kennedy High School

Jordan Sternbach



In the 1960s, chants of “Black Power” were echoed across the nation. The racial tension was so high that black athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos held up black power fists at the 1968 Olympics.

This was in the midst of one of the most tumultuous times in this country’s history, the Civil Rights Movement, when African Americans significantly gained more rights than they ever were in able to. On Long

Island, schools like Malverne and Oyster Bay even canceled classes at times because of the heightened racial tension. Students in John F. Kennedy High School were upset with the Vietnam War, but they took action because that was a conflict that directly affected them. They were the ones who had to fight. Like other students on Long Island, Kennedy students valued civil rights and empathized with the movement, but due to the overwhelming white majority, students did not really participate in civil rights protests.

The Civil Rights Movement was a time in which African Americans became legally equal to their white counterparts. In the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, the Supreme Court ruled that there could be separate educational facilities as long as they were equal. This started the de jure segregation as the official racial doctrine of the United States. In 1954, this direction of the country was reversed in the landmark case of *Brown v. The Board of Education*, which stated that “separate but equal” was a violation of the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. This changed the direction of the treatment of African Americans. As the national government ruled, the states had to follow. In 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested for attempting to sit in the white section on a bus, so African

Americans took to activist causes by refusing to use buses for over a year in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This example of African American activism was successful. Three years later, when African Americans tried to get to school in Little Rock, President Eisenhower had to send in the national guard to dispel the rioting. African American passions were equality no match for white racists. In 1964, President Johnson was a strong proponent of the Civil Rights Act, and he was the driving force of its passage. The U.S. government now had stated, “All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, and privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin (sec 2 of Civil Rights Act). This guaranteed equality based on race.

Although African Americans should have been equal because of the 14th Amendment, the U.S. government felt that it needed a stronger law to guarantee protections to African Americans. They were still, however, prejudiced against after this law was passed. A big victory for this movement was in 1965 when the Voting Rights Act was passed. This act

gave them equality in the voting booth. Even then, African Americans were still treated unfairly. African Americans became the recipients of social segregation. This led to militant black groups who demanded their rights immediately. The protesting nationally trickled to colleges, which then made its way into high schools.

Although many civil rights protests began at the college level, high school students noticed the inequality in their lives and wanted change. They saw the success of their older counterparts, and decided that they, themselves, should participate. Nationally, protests tended to take place in African American areas. For example, in Chicago, some of the protesting in the can be traced to inequalities in public schooling. The Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCCO) helped organize some of these protests. Dionne Danna, in her analysis of the Chicago school protests, found that around two hundred thousand students participated in the school boycotts of 1965. Chicago was such a test area during this time that the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr got involved in a student rally to “oust the principal.” Although the struggle with student activism seemed more prevalent in foreign places like Chicago, the protests soon came right home in the Big Apple.

In New York, student activism hit close to home. Michael Jaliman highlights various issues of unrest on Long Island, using Central Islip as an area with heightened racial tension in the 1960s. At one point, schools were closed for two days due to racial tension, and there was controversy over a local African American recreation center. Central Islip also saw some gains for African American students, as there was a black president of the student council. Also, eleven new black teachers were hired for the district. Like in Chicago, in Central Islip, most of the tension over civil rights happened with the help of black students. As with Central Islip, Long Beach had been several walkouts, which disrupted the educational environment. Jaliman also explores that protesting in high schools was actually fairly uncommon in the grand scheme of things. Yet, because protesting makes the news, that is what people read about. Without protesting, there would be no social change. In the areas where there are pockets of African American students with a white majority, protests are the only way for there to be progress.

Oyster Bay and Bellport also had racial tension. In Oyster Bay, at one point, half the students walked through the hallways instead of going to class. Additionally,

there were constant sit-ins in school. Police officers had to dispel the sit-in. The students of Oyster Bay also protested because of the district refusing to build a new school. Bellport was another divided town. In this town, there was a club called the Black and Puerto Rican Student Union (BPRSU), whose focus was to improve relations with those two groups among the rest of society. They also wanted more help for lower income students with financial aid. The board of education did not listen to the grievances of the students. The tension escalated so badly that students began to fight other students. Like other places on Long Island with problems, racial inequality was the impetus to the tension.

More than the other towns on Long Island, Malverne had significant racial tension. Just as Kennedy was opening its doors in 1966, Malverne was fighting integration in schools. It was ten years after President Eisenhower had sent in the military to integrate Little Rock, Arkansas. According to the New York Times, the Malverne school board were the ones who did not want to integrate. As Buffett noted in his dissertation, Malverne “had fallen victim to racial and ethnic discrimination in housing as well as in education.” Right off the bat, there is clearly a reason for student

rebellion. African Americans, who represent a significant percentage of this community, were segregated against. Students protested for simple things like more attention to African American studies. Just as in Oyster Bay, students in Malverne skipped classes because they wanted more black teachers, which shows similar sentiments that existed in areas large minority populations.

To understand the history of John F. Kennedy High School, one must first understand the surrounding area. According to the Kennedy Alumni association, The Bellmore Merrick Central district was founded in 1934, and aftermath of World War II saw a population boom with people moving to the suburbs. In 1966, John F. Kennedy opened its doors, and it became a new home for students who lived in the southern parts of Bellmore and Merrick. The demographics of Kennedy High School, according to the yearbooks from the 1960s, include few, if any, African American students.

Concerning Civil Rights, it is important to note the student activism that existed at Kennedy in the 1960s. The 1968 yearbook shows a picture of a sign that said, “Do you value life? Give for Biafra,” a reference to the Civil War that began when Biafra

seceded from Nigeria. A humanitarian crisis ensued, and Kennedy students wanted to help. In the same yearbook, there is a picture of a peace sign at a rally. This makes sense because when the students left Kennedy's hallowed halls, some were forced to fight overseas in Vietnam. Baldwin High School Graduate Steve Buchheim noted that the demographics in his school were again very very white, so it is similar to Kennedy. Buchheim said that at his school there were some protests for Vietnam, but almost none for Civil Rights. There is almost no evidence for Civil Rights activism at Kennedy. Perhaps this was because of the overwhelming white majority that existed at Kennedy High School.

Student activism was integral to the Civil Rights Movement. The demographics of a place was an important factor in determining the level of student activism at high schools in the 1960s. As with Chicago, a predominately African American city, there was protesting in the racially diverse towns of Oyster Bay, Bellport, and Malverne, whose facilities needed improvement. At Kennedy High School, there is a very small minority population, so there was very little interest in Civil Rights protest. There were other

forms of student activism, including antiwar protests, but no evidence indicates the existence of a viable civil rights movement at Kennedy High School

4

JFK High School's Response to the Cold War

Jake Piskin



During the time of the Cold War, adolescents were involved in “duck and cover drills” and other nuclear safety drills to feel safe. On a larger scale, the government took a huge initiative by

creating and enforcing laws, and organizations were created to enforce these laws. In America, society had to prepare for the worst in case of every possibility. The Cold War was a time of

strained international relationships leading to years of tension and escalating fear.

The Cold War had everyone on edge, even the people in the small town of Bellmore, New York. John F. Kennedy High School, which opened in 1966, was built during the Cold War Era and followed the rest of the country in establishing and enacting steps towards safety

The Cold War began after World War Two ended and the Soviet Union started to spread communism. The US and the USSR would begin a war that would last the next 40 years. In July of 1945 the Potsdam conference declared that Germany would be split into four spheres. Berlin was split in half; the West side was influenced by capitalism, and the eastern side was influenced by communism. The capitalist side flourished while the communist side struggled to keep up. The barrier that separated these two sides was the Berlin Wall, with completion of construction on August 15, 1961. Each side represented the sides they stood for. Across the pond America attempted to stop the USSR from spreading its views. The domino theory was the fear that if one country fell to communism then all the rest were soon to come. The Cuban Missile Crisis was the closest time the United States ever came to war with the USSR.

This potential world war with the USSR could have ended the world with both countries having enough nuclear power to blow the earth up multiple times. Another aspect of the Cold War was the Space Race. In 1957 the USSR launched Sputnik into space, and as it revolved around the earth the US wondered what it was capable of doing. To win the Space Race, John F. Kennedy declared that we would land on the moon, and on July 20th, 1969 Apollo 11 successfully landed on the moon. It took nearly twelve years but we won that battle.

Technology was a vital part of the Cold War. On the Homefront the United States was affected in multiple ways. In schools, students went through “duck and cover drills” and other procedures to ensure that they felt safe in case of an emergency.

Bert the Turtle was used to relate and teach the kids how to properly stay safe in the classroom. Also, schools built bomb shelters where people in the community could gather in the instance of the USSR launching a nuke at the US. On the home front, Americans were constantly in fear due to uncertainty of the Cold War. Americans went day to day without knowing what was going to happen but they knew there was a chance that their day could turn sour at any moment.

The Cold War's effect on the people of society was evident. Some people agreed with the government's demands, and all of ways they tried to keep us safe, while others protested against the government. At Drew University, Lois Congdon and Neil Mosher helped form a student organization called "ARROW" (Associated Realists Resisting Organization for War), whose general purpose was to demonstrate its members' belief in the deleterious effects and futility of civil defense. ARROW gathered and recruited students so that they would not participate in these drills. They felt it was their right to choose not to participate. In the end, the government said that their rights were limited in a time of war so they were shut down and had to end up participating in these drills. The government shut down ARROW to keep the rest of the United States in check so that no other students would join this movement against government drills. People were scared by these drills because they unaware of when they would take place and with all the bad possibilities that could take place they never knew if it was the real thing. Some of these drills included practice videos put out by the government. One propaganda video was called "Let's Face It," which was put together by the US Government to inform people about how to act during a worse

case scenario by showing what could possibly happen to them with USSR's nuclear power. The government placed a high importance on civil safety as well as safety in the schools. Societal safety was of the utmost concern for the government, and through propaganda and drills they felt Americans would be prepared for the worse case scenario.

During this time, schools were supposedly built to withstand the force of a nuclear bomb. Schools were built with thicker walls and added nuclear shelters where the people of the town can come and gather for protection. Another effect of the Cold War took place with the education of the students. This was done by teaching students more about math and sciences. According to Bo Jacobs text, parents in certain towns were chosen to teach their kids differently from the rest of the country to see if they get the US and edge of the USSR. In addition, the government made laws that required schools to participate in drills, and even though they wouldn't really keep us safe their goal was to make us feel safe. David Greenberg writes about no matter how much we practice and practice with these drills, the power of these attacks would be overwhelming. Procedures went into place in case of an attack, such as dog tags given to people

so they could be identified in case of an incident. This first drills took place in New York City and then spread throughout the country. Bomb Shelters and evacuation drills also were practiced all the time to ensure the safety of the people. This shows how just in case of a USSR attack, we wanted to be able to identify the amount of people lost and the names of those people.

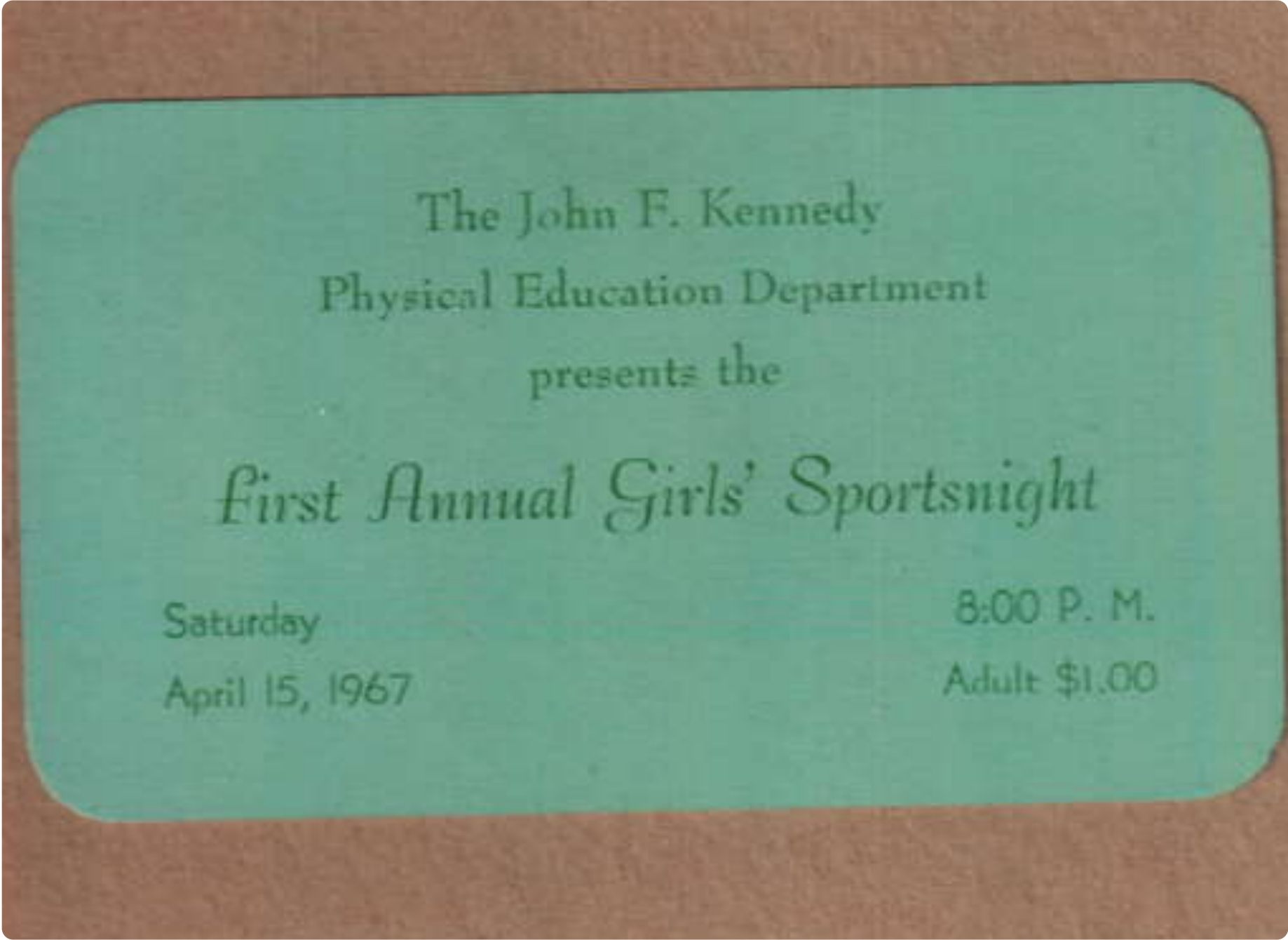
The Cold War's impact on schools can be seen 30 years later. In the 1990s, research was done by Daniel Tröhler on adults who were then kids 30 years ago. These kids had been tested and taught in a different way. Across the country the students of this time who learned in different way and turned to teachers taught their ideologies in the same way no matter where they lived. Even after the Cold War ended the ideas of these people (especially about communism) were biased in the way that they learned it. In Bellmore New York, the Cold War did not have much of an impact on the people as the people were just unconcerned due to the “familiarity” that they had with each other. JFK High School was engineered with a structure and the building was built for the time as government regulations required and the Cold War demanded necessary. Now, 50 years since the school opened we still see

part of the Cold War’s impact, but unfortunately not much remains.

5

Title IX and John F. Kennedy High School

Jacob Shapiro



In 1972, a piece of legislation changed the face of female educational opportunities in high schools across the nation. This legislation was Title IX, which helped to progress girls educational opportunities in

the field of extracurricular activities and athletics. At the time, John F. Kennedy High School was a new and diverse ground that was ready to reap the benefits required of Title IX. Ultimately, Title IX

established equal educational opportunities for all girls in the district.

Title IX is part of the United States Education Amendments of 1972, which addressed some the flaws in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was written to end discrimination in various fields based on sex, religion, race, color, or national origin, in the area of employment. The drawback of this act was that it did not include any prohibition on gender discrimination in public education and federally assisted programs. Title IX was created in an attempt to deal with this issue. Title IX states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Title IX was a large step for the women's right movement as it further increased the ability of women to get an education. When Title IX was originally proposed, it focused very little on sports; this was not considered to be the main focus point of the draft. Its main goal was to give equal opportunities to women in their schooling career as given to men such as scholarships and funding. From the idea of equal funding, girl's sports were involved.

Title IX became law on June 23, 1972. Before the enactment of Title IX, in high school sports, the number of male athletes outnumbered the number of female athletes 12.5 to 1. The year before it passed, only 294,015 girls participated in high school athletics. Just 7% of all high school athletes were girls. In college athletics, only 1% of the athletic budgets went to female sports. After Title IX, there was a dramatic increase in the number of women playing college sports. Title IX encouraged female athletics by making them just as important as the male sports. The schools had to be willing to spend just as much time, money, and effort on the girls sport. "Institutions must provide both the opportunity for individuals of each sex to participate in intercollegiate competition, and for athletes of each sex to have competitive team schedules which equally reflect their abilities." To judge whether or not a school was following Title IX, one of three criteria had to be met:

- "All such assistance should be available on a substantially proportional basis to the number of male and female participants in the institution's athletic program."

- "Male and female athletes should receive equivalent treatment, benefits, and opportunities."
- "The athletic interests and abilities of male and female students must be equally effectively accommodated."

The implications of Title IX were felt by all female high schoolers within a few years of its passage. One of the high school students affected by Title IX was Lorraine Poppe, currently principal of John F. Kennedy High School.

Lorraine Poppe was a student-athlete in high school before the passage of Title IX. She participated in the sports that her school had to offer and played a sport every season for all her years in high school. Poppe returned to her high school as a teacher years after the passage of Title IX. Shortly after she began teaching, Poppe was asked if she could coach some of the girls' sports teams, to which she gladly agreed. Her experiences can show the problems that existed before Title IX's passage and how it changed the school in the years of her teaching after its passage. When Ms. Poppe was playing sports as a high school student, female athletes had four seasons of athletics, while the boys had three seasons of athletics. This was

significant because it meant that their seasons were longer and because of this were taken more seriously. Ms. Poppe never had trouble in sharing space for practice when she played because the high school she attended had plenty of outdoor space for athletics. Because Poppe played outdoor sports as a student she didn't have trouble getting time and space to practice until she was a coach.

When Ms. Poppe became a coach, she saw for the first time the inequality in her high school's sport programs. In her early years as a teacher and coach, Poppe started the girls' track team in the middle school and was the first coach for that sport. Women's track and field and women's volleyball came as a sport in her the high school only after the passage of Title IX. After coaching the track team for years, Poppe also agreed to coach the women's volleyball team. It was once Ms. Poppe had volunteered to coach the girls volleyball team that she realized the inequality that female sports had to deal with. During the winter season, she found herself fighting for space and time to practice as the boys basketball team wanted to practice for longer and not share the gym. Ms. Poppe shared a story of how she once got injured while coaching the women's volleyball team.

She had been putting down the lines that the school had neglected to put down as volleyball was not a very large sport and was only played by the girls. While doing so, the boys basketball team came into the gym and started to carelessly shoot with no regard for the women's coach setting up the court for her sport. In their neglect and refusal to listen to Ms. Poppe's instructions to leave as it wasn't their time to practice, a boy had accidentally tripped and landed directly on top of Ms. Poppe. She was seriously injured and how to spend much time in the hospital due to her injuries. The event portrays the lack of respect that the fellow male athletes had for the female sport teams and the authority of their coaches. This showed that though Title IX had established more sports for girls to participate in, it could not immediately change the minds of those who disagreed with it and did not respect it.

Title IX could not change the mindset of the public overnight, as fewer girls than boys played sports. This had led the public to establish the belief that men's sports deserved more attention and funding. Title IX fixed the funding issue but made compliance very difficult. The problem with the law was its proportionality factor. There had to be an equal number of sports and

similar spending on activities for boys and girls. A few sports are quite expensive and are available to both genders but are dominated by men, such as football and wrestling. The cost of these programs was far greater than the cost of many of the other sports and many argued that because the same amount of money was not being spent on female sports, it violated Title IX. The rules for this scenario became lenient because it was nearly impossible to fix the amount of spending that is necessary for certain sports to operate. This issue makes it almost impossible to be proportional so only 20% of all high schools and universities are technically in compliance with Title IX requirements.

As time has progressed since the passage of Title IX, girls participation in sports has increased dramatically. In 2013–2014, the number of female athletes had reached over 3.26 million. This number represented 42% of all high school athletes. Title IX has also made athletic scholarships available for women. Before 1971, women's athletic scholarships did not exist and received only 2% of schools' athletic budgets. Now there are many women athletic scholarships but the values are not equal.

In 2009–2010, women received 48% of the total athletic scholarship dollars at

Division 1 schools. They received only 40% of total money spent on athletics, despite making up 53% of the student body. There is still gender inequality in the world of school sports that must be addressed but one can argue that Title IX did a lot to bring the line to a much smaller gap between the benefits given to male sports versus female sports. This was evident in the town of Bellmore, New York.

In the year 1966 in the town of Bellmore, New York, John F. Kennedy High School was founded and received its first students. The school was created due to the increase in population of the area and the other high schools in the area were getting near full capacity. The school opened with complete facilities for classes as well as sport facilities. The school was built before the passage of Title IX and evidence of this can be first seen in the locker rooms. The women's locker room is much smaller and farther away from the fields. Another inequality shown by the locker rooms is that the boys have team locker rooms separate from the large general locker room and the girls have no team locker rooms. This was done due to the assumption that was common before Title IX: the boys' sports mattered more and would be given more attention on the team setting. Second, the gym was built to

be able to be divided. The division separates the side with the boys locker room from the side with the girls locker room. When the room is divided it is easy to see that the boys side of the gym is significantly larger than the girls side of the gym.

Besides facilities, girls sports in John F. Kennedy High School were treated as less important and given less focus in school publications. In the school year of 1967-1968, the boys in school had the option to participate in basketball, baseball, bowling, cross country, football, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, rifle, soccer, tennis, track, and wrestling. They had numerous sports to choose from for all seasons. That same year girls could participate in archery, badminton, basketball, bowling, cheerleading, field hockey, kick line, table tennis, and volleyball. The boys could pick from 13 sports to play whereas the girls only had nine. Not only were there less sports for girls, many of the sports were club sports for fun or honor teams which did not receive much attention from the school. They would have small practices after school with inexperienced coaches that they themselves didn't know the rules of the sport. The facilities for the girl honor teams were hastily thrown together and

often had very limited equipment. The discrimination of girls sports in the early years of John F. Kennedy High School is further shown in the presentation in the yearbooks. In the Forever Green John F. Kennedy High School yearbook of 1968, girls sports is given one page. This page is titled “Girls’ Honor Teams Participate in Interscholastic Athletic Competition: Badminton, Basketball, Tennis, Volleyball, Bowling, Table Tennis.” The girls in the “team” photos on the yearbook page are not in uniforms and not in what appears to be official teams. The few pages that exist for girls sports show the lack of care and funding that was experienced by these students. The 1969 yearbook shows a similar sight of the few teams that look thrown together. The surprise comes in the Forever Green yearbook from 1970. Two years before the passage of Title IX, John F. Kennedy High School made a move to have girls sports become a bigger activity in the school. This is shown by the many yearbook pages dedicated to the individual girls sport teams that had competed against other schools. John F. Kennedy High School presented a ton of new sports for the girls to participate in and upgraded the facilities and equipment used by them. John F. Kennedy High School was ready for the changes that

would be made mandatory in two years time.

Not all high schools across the nation were ready and able to accept the changes required by the Title IX legislation. The diversity and new nature of John F. Kennedy High School allowed for the willing adoption of these rules with very little protest. But it is not only the willingness of the school that allowed it to grasp the idea so readily, it was the readiness and status of the community surrounding it. Studies have conducted that show that those wealthier communities had an easier time adapting to the requirements put in place by Title IX legislation. The studies concluded that those who came from a more privileged background: white students with married, wealthy, educated parents, and in a wealthier area were more likely to play a sport. While Title IX benefited girls by increasing the opportunity to play sports, “These benefits were disproportionately reaped by those at the top of the income distribution,” according to economist Betsey Stevenson. John F. Kennedy High School was established in a relatively affluent area and quickly established the equality for girls participation in sports and extracurricular activities.

Title IX was meant to give equality in all aspects of school and extracurricular activities. Due to Title IX, “Girls outnumber boys in almost every extracurricular activity-student government, honor societies, school newspapers, debating clubs, and choir, among others. Girls outperform boys in virtually every academic category as well, according to Steven Rhoads. John F. Kennedy High School supported the legislation of Title IX and believed and worked to achieve the equality it promised until it allowed all girls to have equal chance to participate and move forward.

6

The Acceptance of LGBTQ Students at Kennedy High School

Molly Katz



The United States is a melting pot of different races, genders, ethnicities, and religions. Yet, the exclusion of minorities continues to be prevalent. The LGBTQ community is one of the main focuses of

the civil rights movement of the 21st century, striving to eliminate prejudice towards any person who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. People have specific environments

in which they feel most comfortable, but school is supposed to be a place for everyone, a sanctuary for children to grow. For the LGBTQ community, however, major conflicts often arise in school. Kennedy High School, located in Bellmore, New York, is located in a suburban town that is 90.3% white, with little racial and ethnic diversity, but it has grown in its acceptance of its LGBTQ community. Although inclusion has been expanding at Kennedy High School since 1966, intolerance persists for LGBTQ youth.

Richie Jackson, producer of the TV show Nurse Jackie, graduated from Kennedy High School in 1983. For the LGBTQ community, 1980s was a time of transition. Gays and lesbians were taking on more roles in both the federal and state governments, but they were still without basic human rights protections, and the HIV/AIDS crisis caused a fear of losing jobs and being kicked out of homes. In the small town of Bellmore, New York, Richie was the only student who was openly gay. Being gay set him apart from the rest of the students at Kennedy High School. Richie said, "Everyone did Little League, everyone went to Hebrew School, and everyone was the same, but being gay made me something different." Richie felt it was foolish to hide an integral part of his

being; however, that is not to say Richie did not face harassment.

Shore Road Elementary School, only a couple of blocks away from his house, was a community space made for togetherness and learning, but there were specific times when Richie did not feel like he belonged. In third grade, when every boy signed up to learn an instrument, Richie chose chorus. The gym teacher heard about Richie's choice in elective, and told the boys in his class to "jump on the faggot." A group of boys piled on Richie while he cried, and the teacher silently observed. Afterwards, he pulled Richie aside and gave him a bag of M&Ms; nothing was discussed about the incident that occurred. A moment like this, a time when a teacher verbally harassed a student, asking other students to physically harass that child, is difficult to imagine in the year 2017. In the 1980s, though, the LGBTQ community was struck with what some called "God's plague." The AIDS epidemic was being directly linked to gay men specifically, blaming the entire community for the spread of this awful disease. Of course now if that despicable story occurred at Shore Road Elementary School, the teacher would be fired and the kids would have severe consequences, but if the LGBTQ community was believed

to be directly linked with a terminal illness, it is not surprising that the gym teacher acted in such a way and then simply gave Richie a bag of M&Ms to rid of his unspoken guilt. The painful trend of ostracism was something very few people could fight.

After Shore Road, Richie went to Grand Avenue and continued on a journey of self-discovery, and he took interest in modeling and theater. Later, when he attended Kennedy High School, he had many friends and was actively involved in school clubs and activities. Richie's time at Kennedy High School was marked by positive experiences in the Drama program. He even said that while working on Broadway later in his life, he would remember those hard nights when the Kennedy High School crew would stay for hours working on the set, lights and sound. Richie and many other LGBTQ alumni found that the Drama program was their safe haven, and in 2017 Kennedy High School continues to try to provide students with more safety nets.

By the late 1990s, only a few students at Kennedy High School were openly gay, and Matthew Schwartz was not one of them. Matthew Schwartz was an all around student at Kennedy High School.

By his senior year, Matt was the president of the Key Club, president of the National Honors Society, vice president of the Concert Choir, the announcer on the loudspeaker each morning, a leader in the Drama Club, and an A+ student.

Matthew's dedication and energy to Kennedy High School disguised his anxieties, particularly as they related to his sexual orientation. According to Hutcheson and Tieso, gifted students often participate in community action, helping others, and organizing activities to avoid social anxieties. He was so afraid to be himself that it often led him to bully others, which is not uncommon among such teens. On the first day of Matt's Junior Year at Kennedy High School, there was a "getting to know you activity" in his choir class. Everyone had to answer the question, "What is one thing you are looking forward to this year?" One girl stood up and said, "I can't wait for Matt Schwartz's coming out party!" The situation was discussed afterwards, unlike Richie's unsettling experience, and it was made sure to never happen again.

However, Matt felt a continuous dislike towards the LGBTQ community that he could not overcome during high school. Although he did not feel he could share who he truly wanted to be, Kennedy High School provided him with experiences he

would never forget. When giving the morning announcements, he felt connected to those who worked in the office. He knew the administrators and the secretaries, who made him feel special and worthy. But the Matthew Schwartz that attended Kennedy High School in 1999 was not the same Matthew Schwartz who attended Dartmouth College in 2003. In his Freshman year of college, while surrounded by more of an LGBTQ community, he let himself free. Matt fell in love and his previous energy that was focused on everything except for his individuality became the key to unlock the best new version of himself.

Many other students at Kennedy High School experienced discomfort similar to Matt's. In the mid-2000s, Jake Sachs, although openly gay, felt submerged in a sea of hostility. In third grade, a classmate told Jake he was gay. He did not understand what the remark meant, but he felt the negativity, and knew he had to deny it to gain acceptance. Between the ages of 8 and 16, he was tormented. In school and at camp, the word "faggot" became all too familiar. One time, a student even yelled, "Death to the faggot!" According to research by Pascoe, being labelled a faggot does not have necessarily mean you are gay; rather, it

indicates that peers view someone as being insufficiently masculine. To have interests different from sports, to have a voice that is higher than the bass octave, to enjoy something that a girl would enjoy is what the word "faggot" encapsulates. Jake knew that he could not let his identity diminish, so he reverted to the one thing he knew would keep him secure: physical defense. He had fist fights on the bus and began to take boxing lessons; he learned how to defend himself, and he also knew that there would always be an intolerance towards who he was, an intolerance that he needed to fight to survive for the rest of his life. He hated going to school, he hated being at school, and he always tried leaving school. Even the Drama club, which he thoroughly enjoyed throughout his 4 years, could not change his overall happiness when he entered the school every day. This helpless feeling of discomfort is a trend that still occurs. According to GLSEN, "Almost two-thirds [63.5%] of LGBTQ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 43.9% [felt unsafe] because of their gender expression." Jake was a part of that statistic, until he was a freshman at Marymount Manhattan College. It was at this liberal arts performing school where Jake felt like he belonged. At college, Jake was embraced for his talents in art, writing

and designing, rather than being called a “faggot.”

By the time John Duroseau entered Kennedy High School, the world was a different, more accepting place. Jake Sachs, graduate of 2014, led a completely different journey at Kennedy High School than John. This 5 year gap between the two students was one filled with change and progression. Over the past 10 years, there have been positive changes in the environment of schools regarding the LGBTQ community. Students felt safer in schools, teachers heard less negative remarks, and students said that their peers were more likely to speak out against homophobic comments. Many American television shows began including a gay character. In addition, shows like Rupaul's Drag Race and The Ellen Degeneres Show were specific influences in mainstreaming the LGBTQ community in the United States. Progress in national rights for the LGBTQ also improved when, in June of 2015, same sex marriage was finally legalized throughout the country. John's journey in discovering who he was different from the alumni I interviewed. Yes, people made assumptions, but no bullying occurred. John was never harassed by anyone, and if he felt that people were not thrilled with his sexual orientation,

something he knew he had no choice over, then he was not friends with them. That does not mean that John did not struggle; before he could admit that he was gay, he would overeat to suppress his feelings. He was an introverted boy with little self esteem because he thought people would not like it if he was gay. When he matured and entered Kennedy High School, John realized that did not have to be ashamed of his sexuality. This epiphany created a new, lively, outgoing, and gregarious person, a person that people gravitated towards. His active participation in drama, concert choir, and variety choir made him even more comfortable, and in 2017, John is unstoppable. John lives without worrying about anyone else's opinions of his sexuality and individuality, but he does admit that the topic of LGBTQ is something that is avoided at Kennedy High School. He says that the students will still gossip about the next person to come out or if this one or that one is gay. Graduating next year, John can confidently say that the increase in acceptance, though, is substantial.

As the inclusion of the LGBTQ community increased throughout the world, the more students there were at Kennedy High School that were trying to discover themselves. As being a part of the LGBTQ

became increasingly realistic for adolescents, the students were eager to find a safe place where they could share their experiences and find others either like themselves, or kind enough to confide in. According to Tina Fetner and Athena Elafros, “Gay Straight Alliances are student groups in high schools that have spread across North America since the 1980s.”

At Kennedy High School, the GSA club was created in June of 2011. Mr. Jimenez, a special education teacher, and Mr. Maresca, the school’s social worker, are the staff members who founded and advise GSA. In an interview, Mr. Jimenez revealed how the club began at Kennedy High School. A student that came into his room often would constantly stare at a poster that read, “This is a safe and inclusive space for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and their allies.” Mr. Jimenez did not realize what importance this poster would bring, but when it meant something to someone, he knew that the student deserved a place to feel free. After asking Mr. Maresca to join him in his efforts, they both began the club right before the school year of 2012, with 8 or 9 students involved. In the upcoming school year, 40 to 50 students joined GSA. The club’s goal was to become effective allies, which is a misunderstanding to this

day. The club did not marginalize heterosexuals, for the majority of the students in the club are straight allies. Kennedy High School’s GSA achieved their goal; each Friday the club unites and discusses any current event involving the LGBTQ community, any fears they have for the future, and some tell stories for guidance and comfort. Mr. Maresca said, “The club’s main purpose is to help people understand. Bullying is about not understanding.” The lasting effects of a GSA club at Kennedy High School have been noticed throughout other schools as well. For that reason, Tina Fetner and Athena Elafros said that a Gay Straight Alliance “provides a safe environment, is long lasting, and causes better health outcomes. Besides the weekly meetings, the Kennedy High School’s GSA promotes awareness on the National Day of Silence. The idea for a day like such came from the University of Virginia in 2000, and now students from High Schools and Middle Schools all over the country participate each year. Days like these make students feel proud to be gay as well as “bring attention to the anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning name calling, bullying and harassment faced in schools by students, teachers, and other school staff.” Engel summarizes the feelings of all teachers at Kennedy High School now

when he says, “Americans need to know that thousands of children each day go to school deprived of a happy adolescence.”

The future of Kennedy High School is bright if students, teachers, and administrators remember Eliot Engel’s impassioned words, not just when they face a problematic situation, but every day. If schools continue to choose love, friendship, trust, empathy and respect over bigotry, lives will be endured with more happiness, and those who are subject to hate solely because of whom they fall in love with will be able to love longer. Kennedy High School has this opportunity, and each member of the community has the power to create a better education for all students.

7

The Impact of 9/11 on John F. Kennedy High School

Noah Tepper



When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, “A day that will live in infamy” after the Pearl Harbor attacks, he thought this was the most heinous attack against innocent American people and soldiers.

Since Pearl Harbor there has been only one other event that has ever come close to that magnitude. September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four commercial planes to use as weapons. The result, 2,996

people lost their lives and over 6,000 people were injured. Two of the planes crashed into the World Trade Center buildings, which were only forty miles away from John F. Kennedy High School in Bellmore, New York. The whole nation and its allies were mourning the tragic loss, and so was John F. Kennedy High School. On the day of 9/11 teachers and students were confused and scared for people they knew. The horrific events of September 11 have had a major impact on all people. There have been significant changes all around our high school, starting with the curriculum, safety procedures, and the daily culture of John F. Kennedy High School.

On September 11, 2001, America was changed forever, when four commercial flight planes were hijacked with the intention of crashing them into important American buildings. One of the four planes didn't make it to its planned crash sight.

The passengers on that plane interrupted the terrorists plans and caused the flight to go down on a farm in Pennsylvania. Two of the four planes crashed into the World Trade Center buildings. Both hundred and ten story buildings fell leaving the wreckage which has led to a cost of at least ten billion dollars in property and infrastructure damage. This has resulted in

created a three trillion dollar loss in total. Four planes, two from United Airlines and American Airlines, were hijacked by 19 Al Qaeda terrorists. Two of the planes crashed into the North and South Tower of the World Trade Center, also known as the Twin Towers, in New York City, the former epicenter of Wall Street. Less than two hours later both buildings fell and killed over a thousand. When the towers collapsed the debris and fires from the two massive buildings ruined all the other World Trade Center buildings. The third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The Pentagon is the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense. The plane crash ruined one part of the Pentagon. The fourth plane was allegedly targeting the White House, but never made it.

The aftermath of 9/11 changed the world forever. The impact of 9/11 is felt in everyday life in America. One result of life since 9/11 is that law-abiding Americans need to live in fear of government surveillance, because of the populous, in the most reactionary manner possible, demanded the passage of the Patriot Act. The Patriot Act lets the government monitor communications without allowing for due process. The Patriot Act seems to be a necessary evil. while it protects us in

many way in most cases, it was designed and created out of absolute and utter fear.

What was John F. Kennedy High School like immediately after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? I interviewed Mrs. Scherer, a veteran member of the social studies department, to find out what the school did to ensure the safety of students and faculties, how they got the news out, and immediately after 9/11 what things did the school do to help mourn the loss of almost 3,000 people. I also asked Mrs. Scherer how 9/11 affected curriculum and school safety procedures. She told me about how her class handled 9/11. She immediately was overwhelmed with finding out about people that worked in the city and making sure their students are okay. Mrs. Scherer said that she walked into a period and someone said something about a plane hitting one of the World Trade Center buildings so they went down the hallway to find out what was happening and saw the buildings on fire. The rest of the day the whole school froze. No one taught and kids were getting pulled out of school by their parents. Many teachers were freaking out trying to find out if they knew someone in the buildings at the time. Scherer said on her way home that day you could see the smoke from the highway

going home. Then the next couple of weeks teachers barely gave homework and some teachers made posters and sent letters supporting the troops. The school was very slow in their dealings with their teachers, keeping them mostly in the dark. She compared it to a time when a teacher died during the year. She said they had a meeting the morning after the teacher died, but didn't do that after 9/11. However, she emphasized that 9/11 was the first time something happened like that in the school, so no one was prepared and nobody knew what should or should not be done.

After the appalling attacks on the nation, America was still in shocked, angered, and unsettled. Through the school and the district, people coped with the terrorist attack. In the yearbook for the class of 2002 there was a section of the book with pictures of support for the troops and of the fallen with their families. In the yearbook pages dedicated to 9/11 there is a part about the war on terrorism, and other horrible events of the previous year. They also showed pictures of benefit concerts for the troops and many other fundraisers for 9/11. It says in the yearbook that for the "America: A Tribute to Heroes" telethon, entertainers and major TV networks raised over \$150 million

for the September 11 relief efforts. The yearbook for the class of 2003 had another dedication page for the September 11 efforts. They included the pictures of the troops, benefit concerts, and of George W. Bush at conferences about the war in Iraq. Overall the compassion and tenderness from the class of 2002 and 2003 showed a great deal of empathy to the families that lost people the day of September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, Flight 93, and the troops.

Also, the district's administration office, located at the Brookside Building, did a memorial for 9/11. The district acquired one of the beams from the World Trade Center and had to make a decision what to do with it. The district decided to put the beam in front of Brookside with plants around it and a plaque dedicated to 9/11. Additionally, the towns of Merrick and Bellmore include several many monuments about 9/11. By the Merrick train station there is a monument dedicated to the lives lost that day. In addition, some of the streets in Merrick and Bellmore have dedicated streets to firefighters that lost their lives. Close to the school on the street Stella's Pizzeria is located on has its street name located after the uncle of one of my classmates. Near Calhoun High School there is another dedicated street to

a fallen firefighter. Unfortunately, there are more than those two streets dedicated to the fallen heroes that lost their lives saving other lives on the day of September 11 at the World Trade Center. The school and community have done many things to honor the fallen and show compassion to the heartbroken.

During the events of September 11, the school did not have safety procedures for a terrorist attack. None of the teachers or students knew what was happening. In 2001, no one had smart phones with everything in a fingers reach. Many teachers called loved ones to find out what was happening. Many parents came to the school to sign their children out of school to go home. But, for the students that could not have a parent or guardian sign them out of school they had to stay at school with the teachers and not until they got home did not know what happened. Most people that were at the school did not have the full story of what was happening at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the crash of Flight 93. After 9/11 the school became more prepared for future events. The lockdown drills in and out of the building started happening after 9/11 and now is used whenever a dangerous person is in or near the school. The school is more informative to parents,

teachers, and students about things happening in a serious situation. 9/11 changed the school's safety procedures and now is fully prepared for any threat toward the school. The Cold War brought a similar situation into the spotlight. Both times schools across the country had to adjust to the outside world to better protect the teachers and the students.

After 9/11 the curriculum had to change in all schools in the country, more specifically schools near the attacks. In history class, many teachers now have to teach about 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and about terrorism. Mrs. Scherer teaches AP US History and because of 9/11 she has had to adjust the curriculum to fit another unit in at the end of the year. Also, teachers must teach students the background of Islam to disprove the stereotypes about Muslim people's association with terrorism. In a New York City school teachers need to teach 9/11 with caution because the attacks were right next to the school and some students might have lost a family member on September 11. In elementary school, teachers teach 9/11 without being so comprehensive, because it is a lot of information and some not appropriate for a young students without their parents talking to them before. 9/11 has changed

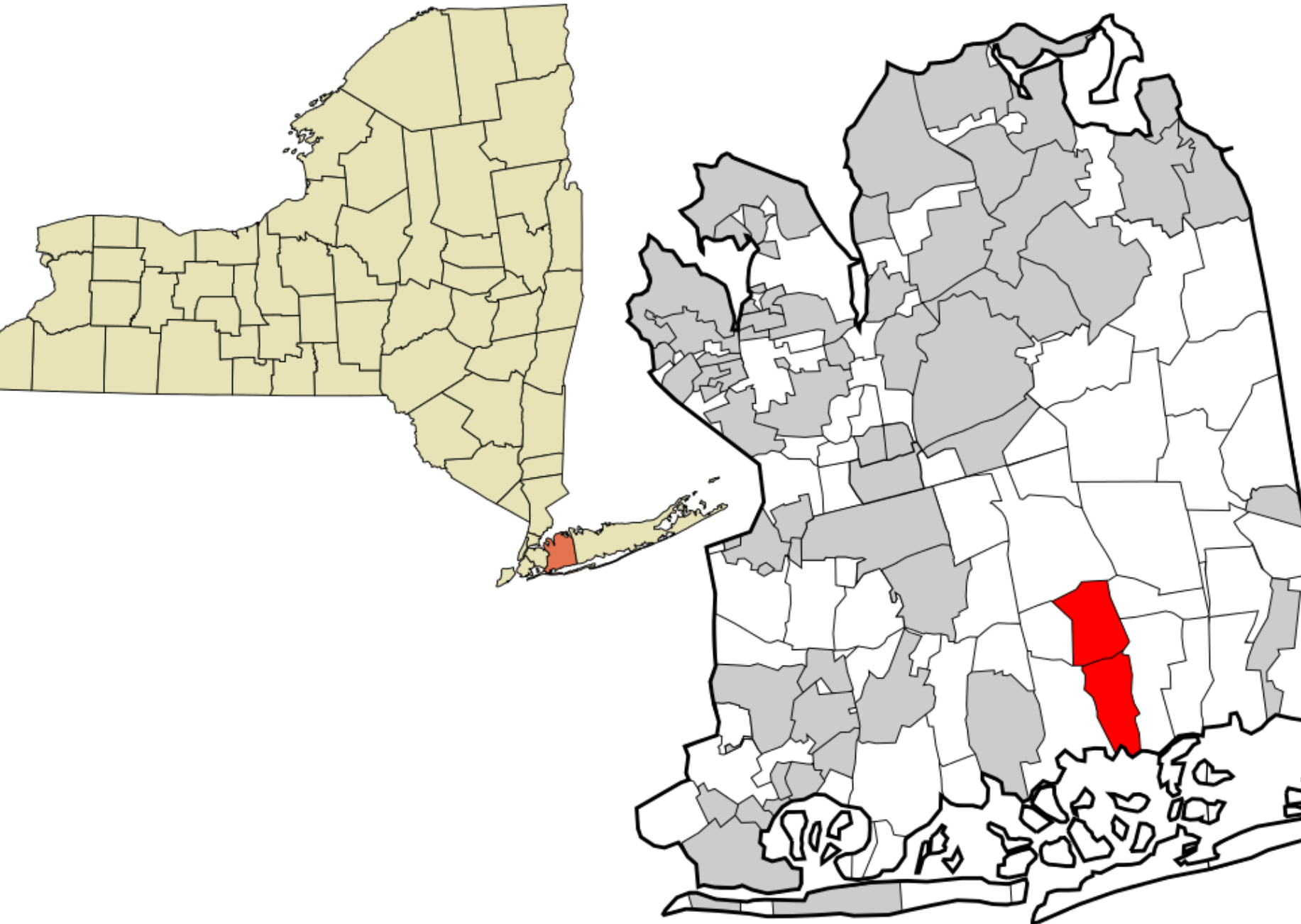
all different types of curriculums in schools in America and specifically at John F. Kennedy High School.

On September 11, 2001, the attacks on America that killed 2,996 people changed the world forever. In school the safety procedure and curriculum were adjusted. Since 9/11, fortunately, America has not had any terrorist attack to the same magnitude to 9/11 or Pearl Harbor. But John F. Kennedy has in place a safety procedure for a situation like that to secure the safety of students, teachers, and the rest of the faculty at the school.

8

The Influence of Changing Demographics on John F. Kennedy High School

Jack Ryan



Population shifts are part of mega-trends in society that are influenced by the economy, social status, ethnicity, and employment and education opportunities. Demographic changes at John F. Kennedy

High School, in Bellmore, New York, reflect larger population shifts in the United States. The transformation of Nassau and Suffolk Counties since World War II represent migrations of different ethnic

groups, which have affected individual communities in different ways. Over the past several decades, while Long Island's population has become more racially and ethnically diverse, the racial, ethnic, and economic composition of John F. Kennedy High School's student body has remained consistent and homogeneous.

Much of Long Island's population explosion stemmed from the postwar baby boom. After World War II, people left the cities, and many moved to Long Island. In the 1940s, Nassau County was known for the aviation industry, which flourished during World War II. America's most famous warplanes, vital to victory, were manufactured at the Grumman and Republic factories. These factories were crucial for development because they provided a large percentage of employment on the Island. In the 1960s, after builders like the Levitt brothers had constructed miles of single family homes and the federal government had assisted white families in moving from cities to suburbs, the population of Nassau County was 97 percent white Caucasian. In Bellmore, Mepham High School was already established and was getting overpopulated by the late 50s. Wellington C. Mepham came up with the idea of integrating elementary schools to become

a central School District. Remarkably so, he came up with the same idea in the early 60s as the establishment of Sanford H. Calhoun was created in 1960. The population doubled on Long Island from 672,000 in 1960 to 1,300,700 in 1970, which lead to the creation of additional highways, which allowed more people to migrate to other towns, including Bellmore.

Over the past 40 years, Bellmore and New York itself have substantially gotten older, as Long Island's millennial population continues to decline. In the 1970s about 42% of Bellmore's population was under the age of 20. This percentage of young residents dropped to 33% by 1980. The population of young residents in Bellmore did not pick up again until the mid 1990s, a trend that is reflected in the school's class sizes. Class sizes have varied from the 400s in the 1970s to 500-600 students in the 1980s, and because of the major shift in population in the 1990s, during which many people migrated out east to Suffolk, the class sizes reduced to about 200. Today, Kennedy High School boasts an enrollment of 1175 students.

Today Long Island is far more ethnically and racially diverse than ever before. In the beginning of 1970s the population was roughly 92 percent white Caucasian. In 30

years the white population has dropped to 68.5 percent. The current population of Bellmore is about 16,300, of which about 2,000 are foreign born. John F. Kennedy High school is 92% white, a fact that has prompted some, including Hofstra University professors Alan Singer and Maxwell S. Hines, to suggest merging the Roosevelt School District, which is predominately black and Hispanic, with Bellmore-Merrick. Hines and Singer say that by merging the school district, “New York State would be obligated to provide enough resources to ensure that the Roosevelt-Bellmore-Merrick School District would be funded to the highest levels in all of New York.” In addition, some say why does it have to be Bellmore-Merrick? The reason is because Bellmore-Merrick is a good fit, is it has already integrated parts of Merrick into Bellmore way before this time and of course because Bellmore-Merrick is advantaged financially and academically. This integration plan would provide an opportunity for students to create a more diverse student community and highlight the persistence of racial segregation in schools across the United States.

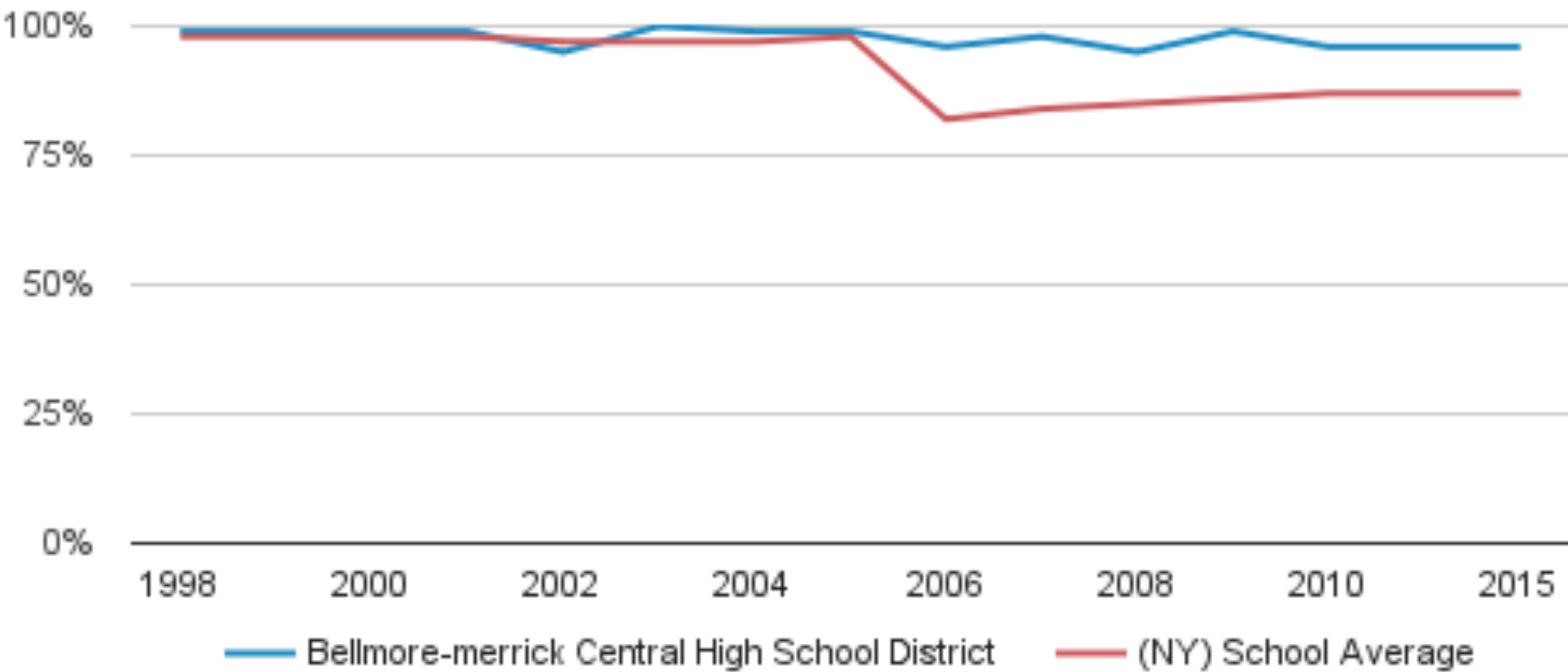
Despite the continuing war on poverty throughout the United States, Bellmore is considered one of the wealthiest towns on

Long Island. Of the sixty-two counties in New York, four counties are far above the poverty line. They include, Nassau County, Suffolk County, Saratoga County, and Putnam County. Approximately 80% of Bellmore’s population has an income over \$75,000, whereas about 46% New York’s total population has this income level. This affluence allows Bellmore-Merrick to spend about \$25,000 annually on each pupil. In addition, Bellmore saw a slight decrease in the percentage of lower-income households between 1980 and 2010. By 2010, 2% of households in Bellmore were considered low-income, compared to 16% in the nation overall. Over the past 50 years, John F. Kennedy High School has experienced periods of population growth and decline, but the racial and economic composition of the population has remained constant.

9

The Causes of and the Changes in Graduation Rates and Requirements

Cory Seisser



High school graduation is a very important event in one's life. Over time, graduation rates have changed at John F. Kennedy High School, along with the requirements to graduate. This has not only affected the

country, but also the state, and the district. Graduation rates have direct relationships with what is happening outside of the high school. As time went on, more has been

expected of students so the requirements to graduate have been changed.

In the mid 20th century, the national graduation rate was much lower than it is now. It has increased steadily for women in the 1960s and 1970s. For males, it increased in the 1960s but started to fall again in the 1970s. A cause of this increase in graduation for males is because, if you got into college, you were able to avoid being drafted to Vietnam. Females had a higher graduation rate because there were more work opportunities available for women. Many younger people did not want to be drafted because they believed the fight in Vietnam was pointless. This began the trend of college students being very vocal when it comes to protesting decisions the government made and attending rallies at their college. Past this point, graduating high school and going to college has become increasingly important in getting a job and being successful. During the 1980s, graduation was at its peak in the early 1980s at an 80% graduation rate. Since this is an average, not all schools had the same graduation rates and some outliers are present when calculating the average graduation rate.

As the 20th century went on, the requirements to graduate high school has gotten stricter. In 1995, New York State passed a law that made it a requirement to pass Regents exams to get a high school diploma. This had a profound effect on all schools in New York State. Instead of the teachers teaching their material the way they want it, teachers now have to teach the class so that they are able to pass the Regents exam at the end of the year. Before the Regents exams being a requirement to graduate, there were Regents competency tests. Regents competency tests were for students that were not able to pass the Regents exams. The competency tests were significantly easier than the Regents exams. These tests enable some schools to show that they appear to have a high graduation rate.

In the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School district, graduation rates are much higher than the average in New York State. While only 75% of students graduated high school in all of New York State, in the district 95% of students graduated. This large difference is likely due to the income status of those living in Bellmore and Merrick compared to those who live in New York State. A higher income helps students because they are able to afford

extra services that could help students pass their classes and their standardized tests. New York State schools also have a higher graduation rate than the rest of the country because New York State has one of the top education programs. The majority of the state also being liberal helps the graduation rate because more money would be given to programs like public education.

The graduation requirements of New York City schools are similar to those of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District. The minimum you need to graduate with a Regents diploma in New York City public schools are to pass a Regents (a score of 65 or above) in the four main subjects, which are math, science, English, and social studies. Along with this, the student needs to pass another Regents exam that does not fall into these four subjects. This last subject is typically a language other than English. In the Bellmore Merrick Central High School District. A passing grade in the language other than English Regents is required as well for the Regents diploma. (NYC schools)

Over time, the graduation rates have increased while the requirements to graduate have become more strict. It

would seem like they would have an inverse relationship, but due to the increase in importance of graduating high school and going to college, pressure to graduate has increased. In the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District, the graduation rate is higher than the average graduation rate of America.

10

The Impact of No Child Left Behind on John F. Kennedy High School

Jack Lido



Societies have always placed tremendous stock in their youth. Children of today are leaders of tomorrow. For this reason, politicians in the United States have taken an interest in education policy, trying to set

a strong foundation for our democratic republic. Over the past 50 years, federal education policy, particularly the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and its amendments, have had an outsized

effect on state and local education. In 2001, President George W. Bush put forward a strong education bill, called No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which amended the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. NCLB, well supported by both Republicans and Democrats, sought to improve the performance of American students, especially in math and English, and to close the achievement gap between the more advantageous American students and minorities, including English language learners, African Americans, and the disabled. The act did this by making schools accountable for students' results on various standardized tests. Both accountability and testing were common themes of NCLB. The act was controversial, with varied opinions and statistics showing both students both trending up and down in English, math, and other subjects. NCLB affected schools across the country and had a profound impact on American students and teachers of and the students and teachers of John F. Kennedy High School.

No Child Left Behind officially passed in 2002, and was arguably the biggest act of federal education legislation since the act that it expanded upon, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA was a part of Lyndon B. Johnson's

left leaning "Great Society" programs, and was the first notable far-reaching education reform in American history. It aimed to help disadvantaged students in the classroom by granting money to school districts and increasing accountability of schools. Examples of these students are those with a disability, those from low income families, or non-native English speakers. This act went hand-in-hand with Johnson's Civil Rights Act of 1964, and is taught today in classrooms as a part on the War on Poverty. The act was the first of its kind, but it was passed by a liberal democrat, it was 40 years later when the next major federal education reform act was passed.

No Child Left Behind was the first form of education reform proposed by a Republican in the presidency. Bush, only days into his presidency, announced his plans for NCLB, what he called the "cornerstone of [his] administration." The bipartisan reform was championed by both George Bush and Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy. Both Bush and his secretary of Education Rod Paige called the passing of NCLB a "new era in public education," the system put into place accountability for schools, as well as new opportunities for students, including the opportunity to change schools if their own

was not meeting accountability standards. It used AYP, Adequate Yearly Progress, defined as “An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards.” This acronym became embedded in the heads of politicians, teachers, and parents alike. The law drew more parallels to LBJ’s legislation, by revealing the achievement gap that still existed between underprivileged and privileged students. It practiced “disaggregation,” what the Department of Education describes as “test results are sorted into groups of students who are economically disadvantaged, from racial and ethnic minority groups, have disabilities, or have limited English fluency.” One Long Island journalist criticized disaggregation, pointing out that it “pigeonholed” kids into various groups, exposing the minorities. Nevertheless, the law still was passed, and made lasting impacts students, parents, and teachers.

Soon after it passed, NCLB had some problems, for it was unable to deliver on some of its early promises. The first involved the system of transferring out of schools, an important aspect of NCLB. Students were promised a transfer if their school was failing, but often did not get one. This problem was particularly

rampant in New York City where capacity issues were a concern. Students who successfully got a transfer usually got one for political reasons, or because their families had a connection in the district. This problem was addressed by the Department of Education, who made a revision in order address the students who were in failing schools first, and guarantee them a transfer. Another problem became evident within a few years. Students with disabilities were taught in the same classrooms and tested and judged equally with those without disabilities. The grades of these students were included in schools’ AYP; the president and congress believed including the grades of disabled students in the school’s AYP would thin the achievement gap and help students with disabilities. This was changed in 2004 with IDEA or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This meant that students with disabilities were still tested, but were judged on the progress they made and were taught social skills as well as academics.

Besides journalists and experts, others noticed problems and were directly affected by NCLB, especially parents. Parent involvement was an important feature of NCLB; obviously. Many parents are interested in their children’s schooling,

so NCLB implemented a “right to know” provision: schools informed parents if the school did not meet its AYP goals, or if a core subject teacher was not “highly qualified” according to state requirements. Regarding their concerns, parents were confused by the new AYP system, since it was not uniform across all students. Some parents were also worried about the testing requirements, they believed that tests did not adequately measure performance. I interviewed Kennedy teacher and parent Kara McManus, who believes that exams are not always the best reflection of student achievement. McManus is not impressed when her children memorize things for a test; she “wants her children to be able to think” with more teaching time and projects, rather than memorizing. Another issue is money. One 55-year-old father in the BMCHSD district was uneasy about his rising property taxes, as NCLB-mandated programs require tax dollars to pay teachers' salaries. He praised the school district, but was still concerned about the new requirements for the taxpayer.

Teachers have also been frustrated with NCLB. One elementary school teacher cried out that she felt “demoralized rather than energized” and was disgusted that she had to spend so much time on

multiple choice testing strategies. Her claim that discovery was almost gone in classrooms, and was being replaced by mundane test preparation was tackled by political cartoonists across the country, who made fun of the strict guidelines for teachers.

My interview with veteran Kennedy High School teacher Mrs. McManus helped shed light upon the impact of NCLB. McManus started her teaching career in 1997 as a world history teacher, moving to US history, psychology and AP Government. As a union representative for the school's teachers union, BMUST, she discussed how the teachers implemented NCLB in its early days. She felt that the government was overstepping its bounds. While the goals seemed great, it would not be as easy as it sounded, and would involve much paperwork. As for the paperwork, she stated, “Not everything you put in writing reflects what the child is doing in your classroom.” I asked her if there were any “disadvantaged” kids in her classes, she said that she did notice some socioeconomic-based disadvantages with kids who did not have a computer or cell phone. She also noticed how some students could not afford certain review books or tutors, or were working part-time jobs, and could not stay awake after

school. In her classroom, she did not change her lessons very much, but she did start to see intervention with kids who were in danger of failing, in an after school program called AIS, Academic Intervention Services, which she noticed was used much more after the passing of NCLB. With testing, her exams and their frequency did not change much, but the standardized exams, like the AP and regents exam, she felt that she needed to do more preparation with her students. I finally asked her if she saw any improvement or regression in her students, and she responded with some hesitation, saying that there was no clear trend; some of the lower achieving kids were helped by the exam prep, but some still did not study enough at home to have it make a difference in their achievement; for these students, "the law doesn't give motivation." She also saw little to no clear trend in the higher achieving students. The most impactful quote from Mrs. McManus criticized the government's involvement in Kennedy high school, from her perspective, "Until you are a teacher in a classroom, you have no idea what it's like."

NCLB's impact on students has been mixed. Journalist June Kronholz pointed out the competitiveness present in students in the 2009 Scripps National

Spelling Bee, and blamed it at least partially on NCLB, which "defines and punishes failure." For the grades, the most reliable numbers were found in a University of Virginia study, which studied students in Virginia, and close to home in New York City. In short, students improved in math and reading but declined in science and history. Researcher Rachel O'Brien writes, "I am unable to confidently assess the overall or absolute effects of the policy, the distributional analyses indicate that the policy often had the expected positive effects, as well as the some of the expected negative effects." BMCHSD was one of twenty-four public school districts that was recognized by the state for improvement in math and English. These districts were considered for this recognition because they "had a significant number of students who are minorities, come from low-income families, or have disabilities." However, some district leaders complained of the bureaucratic requirements with NCLB.

NCLB was a far reaching, unprecedented act of bipartisan government intervention in education. Its effects were varied, while grades in New York City may have increased, our veteran JFK teacher did not see a clear trend. And while minority students and with disabilities were helped

by some of NCLB's support to close the achievement gap, some teachers are concerned with the way in which they teach. So is there a consensus? There's no way to say that NCLB is "good" or "bad" but we do know it was far-reaching, and had a definite impact on Kennedy High School, as well as students and teachers of America.

11

Some Thoughts about Common Core

Raphael Palladino



Common Core, the latest and most controversial education reform, is on the rise, and with it comes a new standards for student and teacher performance. Parents are practically busting down doors in sheer

distaste for the new educational mandates, which are largely misunderstood. The reality behind is that Common Core is either not explained thoroughly enough or is just misread by

the public. Common Core has been misinterpreted among the parents, students, and teachers, children and teachers, but it has potential for success. People are not numbers as test grades are, but numbers are necessary for learning and improving, and that should be the goal of education.

School standards are always a hot topic. Everyone feels that they have a responsibility in taking part in the educational system. Parents are protective over their children's future; educators feel an obligation to perform as they had studied to be and to maintain a reputation among their colleagues; legislators want our future to be bright with intelligent young minds and students want to succeed (most of the time). There is an obvious discrepancy in the way that people think the evolution of the 21st century's federally mandated education standards have evolved. Hints for how these are implied in the people who are interested in it are out and about, however Common Core has an agenda that contradicts it. Common Core is an advanced modern version of accelerated mathematics and English language standards. It outlines what students should know by a certain age after each year. The roots of this were sewn into idealism

dating back to the 1980s, when the idea of a "rise in the tide of mediocrity" in public schools scared people. In 2001, NCLB (No Child Left Behind), an apparent "landmark" in education reform "designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools," was born. Although its intentions were pure, it did not mean that it would be successful and effective. In 2009, state school chiefs collaborated in CCSSO and NGA Center to pioneer the Common Core standards.

One of the most important aspects of the standards are that it is a Research based system. It is important to note the framers' intentions that include the recognition of student variety, and that the goal is to prepare the students for future readiness, not to create masterful scholastic geniuses, because they know the discrepancy in student's grades is inevitable. They were created with the intention to create a standard that would assist students in succeeding in high school and having plenty of knowledge to succeed in college and post-school.

There was a high expectation for Common Core, as it was a revision of a previously mediocre educational reform system, that being NCLB (No Child Left Behind). The opinions of Common Core were mixed, especially after the early results of its

integration. It turns out things were not so perfect after its introduction. Grades were lower. Parents and students alike protested it because of its immediate results. This was the same for the students in the Bellmore-Merrick district. According to a New York Times study in 2013, there was an overall decline in test scoring amongst all students. In this, it is also specified towards certain groups in which profound results were unearthed. “Across the state, the downward shift was similar: 31 percent of students passed the exams in reading and math, compared with 55 percent in reading and 65 percent in math last year.” In addition, “Striking gaps in achievement between black and Hispanic students and their counterparts persisted. In math, 15 percent of black students and 19 percent of Hispanic students passed the exam, compared with 50 percent of white students and 61 percent of Asian students,” and “in New York City, 26 percent of students in third through eighth grade passed the tests in English, and 30 percent passed in math, according to the New York State Education Department.” In these instances, Common Core had a negative impact on students’ grades.

In 2015, as many as 240,000 students opted out of the Common Core exams due to parents’ disgust with the standards.

This stems from a phenomena that is not so misguided: people are afraid of failure. This is a general consensus for parents in all states where Common Core has become part of the curriculum. In New York, it is no different. In a study done by Newsday in 2015, in Bellmore, 607 students were eligible for the mathematics and English Common Core exams. 340 students refused to take the English exam, while 362 students refused to take the mathematics exam. That is well over 50%. Common Core is more difficult, so it has discouraged students, parents and teachers alike.

There is a recognition of common good among the people administering Common Core, but clearly its positives have not taken root yet. According to Daniel Vessely, an advanced mathematics teacher at John F. Kennedy High School, Common Core’s intentions are true, but he says, “In a theoretical sense, the ration of pros far exceeded the cons but in reality it is about a 50-50 split.” When analyzing what he says, it was dumbfounding that his explanations included none of the pros, his reasoning was outweighed the cons. He says that he is “frustrated” in the numerous recent mathematics curriculum rearrangements and that the pass rates of testing in the school are “misleading”

because of the assisting curve, due to a national relative scoring. Vessely says, “I am hoping that Common Core is allowed to develop and grow into a curriculum of fewer topics covered in a deeper way with there being less emphasis on testing and test scores.” He recognizes the lack of trust from the public and wants it to improve. It seems that it is tiring to have the curriculum jerked around as it is. The data are bad, but according to Vessely, not as bad as they seem. US Representative and former New York State Senator Lee M. Zeldin says, “Regardless of the good intentions, Common Core has become an Uncommon Disaster. My office has been inundated with phone calls, emails, letters and faxes from parents, teachers, students and community members that are very concerned with this new program. We must be committed to providing our students with the best possible education available. However, education is not about teaching to the test and it should never become a one size fits all endeavor, sinking to the lowest common denominator.”

The issues of Common Core will perhaps be worked out in the future, but as of today its success is to no avail. It is a well oiled machine that needs work and is far from perfect. After checking the two sides,

in which Common Core is a positive or a negative, it can be said that Common Core is something not completely tapped yet. Yes, it has not been successful in recent, however with enough research, sampling and effort, perhaps it will have a future ahead. Nassau County has amongst one of the most developed educational systems on Long Island, that including the Bellmore-Merrick Central District. It is to be hoped that we shall see a bettering of the educational standards and therefore, an improvement in college/life readiness and above average intelligence for students exiting high school.

PART 2 - INSTITUTION

12

When a Cougar Comes Back: The Reasons Behind the Multigenerational Kennedy Family

Alixandra Wilens



It takes a village to raise a child. A parent cannot alone account for all of a child's growth and development, so it helps the parent to know that her/his daughter or son is going to a place where she/he will

definitively have a positive experience filled with memories to last a lifetime. The best way for a parent to be assured of this is to experience it on her/his own, and this is especially true of the alumni of John F.

Kennedy High School. Many Kennedy alumni choose to return to the Bellmore-Merrick region later in life and enroll their children at John F. Kennedy High School. This phenomenon can be traced to sources both within Kennedy High School, like the high standards of education and extracurricular possibilities, and from the surrounding Bellmore-Merrick community, including the family and friends who are just as much a part of that village as are the child's teachers.

John F. Kennedy High School became a functioning school in 1966. The idea for a third school was first proposed in 1963, just three years after Sanford H. Calhoun High School had sent on its first graduating class. The area of Merrick (and North Merrick) was still rapidly growing, even as the post-WWII baby boom period was coming to a close. Kennedy High School would begin its legacy with 28 acres and a capacity for 2,000 young minds eager to learn from both the Merrick and Bellmore regions. This would be the third high school to enter the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District, but graduating seniors of its opening year would be allowed to finish their high school education where they started, in either Calhoun or Mepham, instead of transferring to Kennedy. The first year

would involve only sophomores and juniors (since the school would not expand to include freshman until much later in its history). The institution opened its doors soon after its cornerstone laying dedication ceremony on Sunday, October 30, 1966. Anthony W. Yeneralo, the principal of Sanford H. Calhoun High School right until Kennedy's first day of school, became the principal of an eager new educational facility that still had ongoing construction projects as students began their first classes (like tennis courts, athletic fields, and additional room for parking requirements). Fifty years later, this grand educational facility is still going strong, having produced a myriad of outgoing, upstanding citizens ready to change the world.

Alumni might feel comfortable sending their children to learn where they gained the knowledge they needed to enter the world because they know that Kennedy High School is still up to the challenge of not just molding, but also expanding and raising young minds to the level of comprehension expected by modern-day forces and enterprises. John F. Kennedy High School is known for its high standards of education, as well as its consistent ability to prepare its students for their future lives and careers. The

school is ranked 68th among all secondary education institutions within the great state of New York. It boasts an eighty-eight percent passing rate among Advanced Placement (AP) tests, with an average student score of 4.3 out of 5. Adam Schefter (Class of 1985) and Steve Levy (Class of 1983) are two John F. Kennedy High School alumni who were asked to come back to the high school in 2012 by the Kennedy Student Government. They were asked to come because of their success in the field of sports communication, both managing successful careers as ESPN personalities. They both attribute their success to learning typing in John F. Kennedy High School. Just as it did during these former students' years, Kennedy continues to stay as up-to-date as possible with its technological advancements to prepare its students for twenty-first century collegiate and working environments, especially through Smart Boards, iPads, and the recently installed Mac Lab, complete with enough brand new Apple Mac desktop computers to satisfy an entire class.

More than the technology, alumni often think fondly of John F. Kennedy High School because of the warm faces that greeted them at the doors of their classes every day. The faculty of this school

ensures that every student makes the most of her/his high school experience. One former student, Marc Bromberg (Class of 1977), remembered his biology teacher, Mr. Crouch because he was "engaging to the students and entertaining." Zach Albahae (Class of 1969) readily recalled that his favorite teachers were Alan Berkowsky, a math teacher, and Patrick Variano, a choir teacher. Today, former students still come back around the middle of the year to visit their favorite teachers and give them updates on how college has treated them, usually thanking them for the lessons they took with them from Kennedy classrooms. Susan Kay (Class of 1983) had an interesting experience when "My son [Class of 2014] had a teacher in his science class that I had known as a student at JFK. She was a new teacher when I started at JFK and in Eric's year she was retiring." Teachers, sports coaches, and club advisors are at the heart of what makes the academic environment of John F. Kennedy High School a place alumni want to come back to when they have families of their own.

Many former students of Kennedy High School who are now parents can also tell that Kennedy is keeping up with the more demanding expectations of college

admissions officers and potential employers by the workload of their children. Parents are increasingly noticing the advanced workload now as compared to when they attended. One parent, Missy Lobel, commented that, since her high school experience, “The level of intense academics and the pressures have changed, all for the worse.” Another alum insisted, “The courses now are much harder.” There are many more AP courses offered at Kennedy, which culminate in College Board-administered AP exams in May, one month before students’ final exams, sometimes replacing them. These college-level courses often dramatically increase students’ workloads to keep up with the fast paced curriculum. Furthermore, the school now offers a nine-period day, rather than the eight-period day it had when it opened in 1966. While this all might be a cause for concern among many parents worried about the increased stress levels of their children, it also serves as a reaffirmation of the belief that John F. Kennedy High School does ensure that a student will be ready for the further intensified workload of a college freshman.

Alumni are also encouraged to send their children to their high school alma mater because they are aware of the plethora of

activities available to students outside of the classroom. Missy Lobel (Class of 1982) recalled that she “did a lot of activities, including Key Club (I was Key Club Secretary), Student Government, I was Prom Chairwoman, and I was on Kickline.” Others even regret not having done more during their time at JFK High School. Syndi Becker (Class of 1978) admitted, “When I look back now as an adult, I wish I had been involved in more school activities.” The possibilities of extracurricular achievement are certainly a part of what draws Kennedy alums back to the school. The range of (and funding for) extracurricular clubs, sports teams, and drama programs has also expanded in recent years, which gives students today a variety of new opportunities and experiences outside of academia that their parents could not have possibly fathomed during their high school days, even though these new possibilities also add more to students’ already heavily stacked metaphorical plates. The memories made in after (and before) school hallways transcend both years and generations, which is part of why alumni keep bringing their children back: in the hope that they will create their own Kennedy High School memories.

Alumni are drawn back to this school because it fosters a community that people want to be a part of. The Cougar community creates a social network that is so welcoming that it encourages returning, connecting, and second generation Cougars, as evidenced by the alumni organization. With so many former students so proud of their Cougar roots, it was only a matter of time before an alumni organization was formed. The John F. Kennedy High School alumni group, now known as Bellmore JFK Alumni Inc., originated in the early 1990s. Founding members reached out to well-known alums (no small job, considering that at this point there were over 9,800 graduates) and Long Island publications, asking for postcards and letters containing personal information and notice of interest in representing a certain class. The group tried to create a collective alumni database, but it fell into disarray by the advent of the twenty-first century. The hope for an alumni group faded until the early 2010s, when the idea was resurrected in large part by Eileen Connolly, former Assistant Principal of John F. Kennedy High School. They began re-contacting alumni and placing ads entreating Bellmore JFK alumni to come forward and join the newly re-formed Bellmore JFK Alumni, Inc. The alumni

group as a whole felt a need to “give back to the school” that they had come to love in their youth. The group has been flourishing ever since. There is something about this school that makes people want to stay in touch with it, as evidenced by the alumni organization’s first ever multi-high school, multi-graduating class reunion in 2014. The reunion occurred simultaneously in Long Island and in Florida allowing former schoolmates to call each other and trade stories about their exciting times as students of John F. Kennedy High School (among students of Sanford H. Calhoun High School and Wellington C. Mepham High School). While not everyone in the alumni group is a parent of a second-generation Cougar, the strength of the desire by Kennedy graduates to continue being a part of the Kennedy High School tradition reveals how powerful the Cougar social network has become, making it a factor in alumni’s return to the Bellmore-Merrick region that cannot be ignored.

Several alumni who are parents of Kennedy students have spoken of a close-knit Kennedy community. One graduate commented, “Some of my best friends were people I met [at JFK].” Syndi Becker added, “There is a real sense of community that the graduates of JFK have

for each other.” The connections made in the halls of John F. Kennedy High School manage to stick around long enough to encourage returns to the Bellmore-Merrick area years later as adults.

There are so many aspects of John F. Kennedy High School itself that have returned so many alumni to its doors as parents of students; however, outside of Kennedy High School is the Bellmore-Merrick region, a community that offers more fascinating causes for alumni returning with families. Merrick was named after its first denizens, the Merokee Indians, and it became an English colony after a 1643 treaty with Merokee Sachem Tackapousha to elude the tyranny of King Charles I. Bellmore was also settled by Englishmen who has travelled from Connecticut across the Long Island Sound. The two towns became connected by the South Shore Railroad, later the Long Island Railroad, in the late nineteenth century. Both towns continue to thrive to this day, and both are greatly a part of the appeal of John F. Kennedy High School.

Alumni continually cited the places where they live as reasons for their decisions to return, especially as good places for families. Laurie Satcowitz (Class of 1986) mentioned, “I came back to Merrick with

the hopes of raising my children in a great neighborhood with good schools and a sense of community” (Satcowitz 2016). Beth Rosen-Korgood (Class of 1981) stated, “We ended up here [in Merrick]... and I realize that it has been the best decision that we ever made.” When asked why she returned to Bellmore as an adult, Robyn Friedman (Class of 1977) responded, “I felt it was a good area to raise a family.”

Alumni also often returned to Bellmore and Merrick due to work opportunities and family in the surrounding area. As a pulmonologist, Missy Lobel found living in Merrick helpful so that she could work at Winthrop University Hospital. Both Susan Kay (Class of 1983) and her husband work locally. Alumni further returned because older generations of their families have continued to live in the Bellmore-Merrick region, and they want their children to have close relationships with their grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. Missy Lobel determined that returning to Merrick was important because she desired “to be near her family to help raise [her daughter], Sammy.” Susan Kay included that it was good to have “the grandparents so local to help with our children when needed.” Her children were able to develop a strong bond with their grandparents by having

dinner with them every week. Syndi Becker also acknowledged family ties in her decision, stating, “I was going through a divorce with one very young child and one on the way. I needed to be around people that could be supportive.” When going through significant changes in one’s life, nothing becomes more sacred than family. A community provides economic opportunities as well as allowing extended families to remain convenient distances from one another.

Alumni who were interviewed were asked whether they had a stronger preference for their children attending John F. Kennedy High School or growing up in the Bellmore-Merrick region. A strong majority answered that they wanted their children to grow up their respective town, although some did not have children at the time of their decision to move back to Nassau County. John F. Kennedy High School is an integral part of the Bellmore and Merrick communities, and each entity’s influence on the other cannot be overlooked.

John F. Kennedy High School has gone fifty years strong for a reason. It manages to bring students to a collegiate level of education while still allowing for new and diverse forms of learning both during the school day and after the final bell has rung.

The Bellmore-Merrick region has been proud to claim Kennedy as its school, and it in turn has had its own hand in encouraging graduates and former denizens to return with their own families. Who knows how many generations of a Kennedy family will have gone by fifty years from now? Maybe a new second-generation Cougar will walk through those green doors next year, alongside a parent proud to be back where it all started. The legacy of this school is more than the statistics or the numerous accolades it attains. It is the students who graduate proud to be wearing green robes of accomplishment and the parents who beam at them from the stands, some (more than you might think) secretly roaring with their Cougar hearts.

13

School Lunches through the Decades

Hannah Choset



School lunches are an essential part of students' daily lives. Each day, nearly thirty-million school lunches are served. Once school lunches were established, schools adopted new methods, such as in

school cafeterias and kitchens. The liberal idea of allowing the government to control social issues is evident with the government's influence on school lunches. Presidents have been instrumental in

affecting school lunches. Harry Truman created the official National School Lunch Program in 1946; Richard Nixon proposed the amendment which advocated reduced school lunches for children in poverty and overall, well balanced, nutritious meals in 1970. In the modern twenty-first century, presidents still influence school lunch programs. Most recently, Barack Obama, with the assistance of his wife, Michelle Obama, encouraged healthy eating coupled with portioned meals. They passed the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2012. At John F. Kennedy High School in Bellmore, New York, the changing legislation and new dietary restrictions have altered the lunch program as a whole. Also, lunches changed to follow society, as the increased number of cars for high school students encouraged off campus lunches. School lunches have changed in John F. Kennedy High School from its creation to present day as new legislation and other dietary awareness became prevalent.

School lunches were first developed as the first cafeteria was founded towards the end of the nineteenth century. Before the Industrial Revolution, students would walk home from school, and parents would leave work so the family could eat together. However, with the new machines,

parents, and unfortunately some children, were required to work in factories, thus making it difficult for people to step away from their respective occupations. From there, the first cafeteria idea was born as schools obtained the responsibility to feed students during the day. However, it was not a lunch room per se, but just the notion of having cooked lunches for the students. This became a prominent idea after philanthropic committees decided it was their job to ensure a decrease in malnutrition throughout America.

Philadelphia and Boston were the first two major cities to establish a school lunch program. In 1894, the first view of school lunches began as a New England kitchen provided cheap and nutritious meals for students. This became a revolutionary mark on school lunches for now. During the beginning of World War I before having to ration certain foods, ordinary school lunches consisted of pea soup, lentils, or beans, priced at a mere three cents. For a few more cents, students could buy vegetable stew, creamed salmon, or chopped egg sandwiches. Although not the most appetizing, students were able to eat well for a low price. There was not an official lunchroom to eat in, so students would eat in classrooms. Organizations, such as the Parent-Teacher Association, were founded to provide essential utensils

for cooking to schools. With that, certain schools had pots, pans, and stoves available to all. Students preferred having hot meals rather than the regular sandwich, so some students brought home cooked meals, such as soups, which they stored in jars to warm at school. Students who brought lunch from home originally packed it in a cardboard box, earning the name lunch box for later years. At the beginning of the school lunch program, parents and community members were the most influential parts of providing aid.

Governmental action became prevalent in various sects of America, most evident in the political sense; however, the liberal idea of having the government involvement also appeared in the social idea of school lunches. During the Great Depression, governmental aid increased to help poverty-stricken children. The intent was feed children in rough sections in major cities in America. After the surplus from local contributors, schools were given extra materials to prepare with that they could not maintain. For a few decades, ultimately ending in the mid 1940s, a restaurant entitled the Childs Restaurant served decent yet nutritious meals to working class men. This restaurant idea formulated the model for present day

cafeterias. Schools needed an exemplar to base their cafeterias off of, and this building proved to be a successful, long lasting model for others to follow. Unfortunately, the owners lost control of the company when people revolted against the vegetarian ideas. In 1946, President Harry Truman used his powers to develop the National School Lunch Program, which provided nutritious yet cheap school lunches for the students. During the 1950s, schools were faced with the problem of feeding more students than ever before because of the baby boomers generation. Schools were forced to search for cheaper and more effective alternatives, and unfortunately, they started relying on vending machines. This became the first step towards unhealthful meals. Through the United States Department of Agriculture, school lunches were made cheaper during the pricey times. They ensured every meal had the essential parts of the diet, like dairy, protein, fruits, and vegetables. Towards the late 1960s, school lunches became more ethnic to accommodate new students' preferences, so unusual foods became key, like lasagna, enchiladas, and chili. During this time, government reform aided minorities and assisted the people during financial crises.

The most dramatic changes in school lunches occurred in the few decades after, influencing lunches to where they are today. In 1970, President Richard Nixon passed an amendment to the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. The Child Nutrition Act, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, used the correlation between nutrition and success to further how research to promote healthier living for students is indispensable. The United States Department of Agriculture gained responsibility to meet the academic and nutritional needs of the students. Nixon's changes including reduced lunch policies through governmental funding. Eighty-six percent of families were eligible for free lunch, so this program benefited many. The government's new added features unfortunately were believed to make the children gain weight. Federal budget cuts fostered changes, such as tofu instead of meat, and unfortunately increased the price of subsidies, so families had to pay more and receive less food. In 1981, with much criticism about the new changes in lunches that supposedly reduces the nutritional value, President Ronald Reagan imposed new legislation to ameliorate the conditions. Substituting yogurt for milk lead to quite varied substitutions, like ketchup for vegetable. Seeing how people

believed they could get their vegetable intake from ketchup was discerning. However, that was overshadowed by the budget cuts, which caused more problems for families. This proved how money was more important than nutrition. In the mid 1990s, new legislation aimed to better dietary issues were produced. The Department of Agriculture set guidelines for school lunch staff to follow when preparing lunches so the children will receive full benefit. There were also initiatives, such as the Healthy School Meals, which sought to educate children about nutritional meals. The end of the twentieth century witnessed the vehement promotion of healthier eating with enforcement of new legislation, directly enacted by presidents, in order to reiterate the necessity of having effective school lunch programs.

The start of the twentieth century prompted more change as obesity became a major concern. This time, action came from different parts than prior. Due to the increase in obesity nationwide, the United States Department of Agriculture initiated nationwide education of nutrition to lower the number of overweight children. They gave schools the power to decide what specialty snacks to sell. It was nationally mandated that schools serve good

portions of grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and dairy, so the freedom to decide which snacks to sell is important. It is common for many high school aged students to eat off campus at various quick shops. Unfortunately, students have to rush to have lunch. As compared to other countries, America usually only sets aside under an hour for school lunches. This is harmful as students are forced to rush while driving and choose lunch that will be quick. They are left to eat fast foods. In recent changes with Obama's new health care aimed to deal with obesity, he requires all chain restaurants and shops, as well as vending machines, to include calories. The goal to educate people on their poor caloric intake is not necessarily the most efficacious as people ignore the boards. However, this is directly related to school lunches as older students do not often eat in the cafeteria. In 2012, with First Lady Michelle Obama's assistance, the United States Department of Agriculture signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which aimed to serve healthier foods to children due to the obesity risk. Unfortunately, this act is very restrictive, as other countries' lunches do not pass the harsh criteria. For instance, France serves a four course lunch with cucumber salad and salmon as the star of the meal. America usually serves "mystery

meat" with potatoes and canned fruit. This direct juxtaposition explains why France has a lower obesity rate. New changes at the start of the twenty-first century hoped to ensure healthier lunches for the students, continuing a decade long struggle.

Schools have evolved their techniques to produce the healthiest food in the most effective way. The easy way for schools to prepare school lunches is to heat up frozen foods. However, this is incredibly unhealthful. Common meals include frozen pizza, burgers, and fries. Students are opposed to the new health changes that contain more lean proteins and whole grains. As an effect, schools have noted children are throwing out more food and schools are losing money. Students are seen throwing out the fruits and vegetables of the meals. In other instances, schools try to alter the appearances of the foods to engage more students; the foods now are not necessarily healthier, but they appear better. For instance, instead of regular doughnuts, there are whole grain doughnuts, but that does not hide the fact that they are still doughnut. Efforts to reduce obesity backfired, as students openly refuse to eat the healthier parts of the meals. Financially, the changing school

lunch programs legislation has helped numerous families. There are new regulations with the updated National School Lunch Program, but they have become too restrictive. As of 2012, thirty-one million children benefited from the reduced school lunch program. This has been proven helpful, for more students are getting lunch than they would have, and now they can have a nutritious meal before learning. It was found that children who were fed sugary, fatty foods had lower intelligence quotients than other, better nourished students. Therefore, providing lunches clearly helps the children because they can eat well while prospering in school. The projected results of the school lunch program were to feed children healthful and affordable meals.

Besides the actual food causing issues in the school cafeteria, various dietary restrictions have implemented necessary change. More specifically, students' lives became inundated with nutritional changes for health reasons or better living, such as allergies, gluten-free diet, and vegetarian meals. From 1997 to 2010, the number of children under the age of eighteen who suffer from food allergies has risen eighteen percent. There is no known reason for the increase, but the large number is definitely something to not be

overlooked. The most common allergies are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish. Schools are responsible for serving children with food allergies while keeping them safe. Although not an allergy, another food restriction is celiac disease. This autoimmune disease is when gluten causes damage to the small intestine. However, this is just as dangerous because cross contamination leads to further issues. Celiac disease is common in one out of one hundred and thirty-three Americans. Many students also follow a strict, vegetarian diet. Five percent of adults in America (sixteen million) decide to pursue this healthful living. This is also important in school lunches because this is a major restriction. These students choose not to eat meat, so there must be a separate meal for them. Schools have learned to accommodate students with restrictive diets while preparing and serving school lunches.

To supplement my research, I interviewed someone on the lunch staff from John F. Kennedy High School who had the most experience within the school district. The woman who helped me, Ms. Debbie Shiner, first started working here years ago. The most common snacks sold were "black and white cookies, Snapple iced

teas, freshly baked muffins, and an assortment of pies and cheesecakes.”

Kennedy High School’s lunch program has changed recently due to the stricter dietary restrictions, accompanied by “fewer choices of food and a decline in sales.”

This decline could be due to the increased prices in lunches. About five years ago in middle school, the average school lunch only cost \$1.75, but presently, the lunches cost \$3.25. Those prices alone may hinder people from buying lunches, when there are cheaper alternatives available. There may be limited choices because fewer people have bought foods, causing the staff to compromise instead of wasting. It would be interesting to see which caused the other: fewer choices because fewer people bought lunches, or fewer people bought lunches because of the fewer choices. Working here, Ms. Shiner has had more “freedom and creativity with preparation and certain food choices.” I wondered if the staff has observed any new health issues related to obesity; she was unable to answer my question because the staff does not have the opportunity to interact with the students outside of the kitchen. If I had another interview, I would ask the other staff members about their contact directly with the students, like the members who serve the food or work the cash register. Due to

the increased prevalence of food allergies, there have been modifications to the food preparation process. According to Ms. Shiner, “There are more students with life-threatening dietary issues than ever before,” raising concerns. Sometimes, they have to order specific items for certain children with dietary restrictions. It is extremely indispensable that the food preparation is taken “very seriously to prevent cross-contamination,” which can be fatal. She has noticed a dramatic change with students who have altered their diets with vegan and gluten-free circumstances. Students are voluntarily choosing healthier lifestyles, and in doing so, the lunch staff accommodates. Regarding school lunches and the reduced lunch program, she believes that “no student should go hungry,” so it is a beneficial program. She explained that the reduced price lunch system works “based on income” with guidelines set by New York State. The program works as the state “reimburses the school district on the percentage amount set by the State Education Department.” For my research, I was most interested in seeing the change of food legislation, so I found certain legislative acts passed back at the time of the school's opening; with the intent of showing the change with modern legislation, I specifically asked about

Michelle Obama's service as First Lady. Ms. Shiner noted how there were new "dietary restrictions set forth by the government" because of Mrs. Obama's influence. Most notably, there have been "reductions in: portion size, calorie count, sugar, sodium, and fats" to promote better eating habits. In 1970, students ate mundane, unappetizing food. The yearbook has a picture of a half-eaten burger with some potato chips. This is not as nutritious as the government hoped. According to the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District Report Card, 457 students in the school are eligible for free lunch, and 76 students are eligible for reduced lunches. John F. Kennedy High School in particular aimed to create the best lunches for the students, and the lunch staff often noticed changes in inventory with snacks to enforce better diets.

Although many students ate in the school cafeteria towards the opening of the school, changing times parallel modern ideas of the students. In 1987, although many students had cars, there were not nearly as many as students do today. The lucky students who had cars traveled to fast food chains, pizza parlors, and bagel stores. The common places for the students to travel were Roy Rogers,

Heavenly Yogurt, Bagel City, and McDonald's. A new Burger King and a new Taco Bell opened, encouraging students to eat fast food. The students also frequently ate at the Deli. Presently, students routinely go out to similar lunch joints, but different versions. Students enjoy eating at La Piazza, Town Bagel, and the same little village Deli. Differently, students eat at Panera and Chipotle, which are newer but classier fast food brands. Although these lunches do not follow the United States Department of Agriculture food restrictions, the government and school trust the students will make the right choices and choose nutritious meals. Students who are able to leave school during their lunch periods took advantage of this privilege, never stepping foot into the cafeteria. The National School Lunch Program still is important, despite older students' preference to leave campus for lunch, because the precedents set influence future generations' diets and promote healthy living.

Through the years at John F. Kennedy High School, the indispensable school lunches mirrored health legislation. To provide aid to students in need of financial assistance, Kennedy High School in particular used the reduced lunch program, helping students locally who

anonymously are still able to receive lunches. This ameliorated the situation as students could now eat nutritious meals at affordable costs. Also, the cafeteria amended its ways promote healthful living, such as reducing the sweets content and augmenting the fruit and vegetables content. Since 1966, there have been various political officials who have implemented health changes, such as Michelle Obama with her proactive school lunch policies. Likewise, the modernization and availability of cars have prompted students to eat outside of the schools, which risks unhealthy choices. Overall, however, John F. Kennedy High School has met its goal of providing nutritious yet affordable school lunches to all students.

14

The Library at John F. Kennedy High School through the Decades

Morgan Satcowitz



One of the most important places in a school is the library. Whether it is to read, borrow a book, study, do homework, or conduct research, everyone visits their school library. Due to the importance of

the library, there have been many changes over the years. With computers and databases, libraries can be used for online research, as well as research through books, which makes the idea of going to

the library a lot more appealing to young people. The library at John F. Kennedy High School has been a constant in the lives of its students since the opening of the school in 1966, and since then it has evolved with the changing times and technology to better serve its students.

The first school libraries formally began in the late 1800s, when the American Library Association (ALA) was founded. School libraries give students a place to go to study, to concentrate, and to work diligently. School libraries are also places where students could meet and socialize during and after school hours. They are somewhere that students can go on their free periods when they do not want to leave the school. These students can also go to the library after school to work on projects and homework so that they have access to any materials that they may require instead of going home where they would be cut off from any possibly necessary resources. Libraries serve their purpose of providing a quiet space for students to learn and grow.

The library at John F. Kennedy High School has been active since the school opened its doors in 1966. It is there to provide students with a place to go during their free periods to do homework, study,

or to just hangout. The library serves other purposes as well. It lends out calculators to students that happen to forget theirs. There are also extra copies of textbooks behind the front desk that students can ask to borrow for homework and studying purposes. Computers are also available for student use along with a printer that students can access with their school login. Another feature that the library has is interlibrary loan, when a student needs a book that the library does not have but another school does. The book sharing program that JFK is part of includes all of Nassau County and has been in place since the school was founded. The library also has the current librarian, Mr. Melillo, who has been the librarian at this school for the past thirteen years. The library is open all day and after school until 3:15. The JFK school library is a valuable resource that all students have used at one point or another.

Kennedy High School used to have a Library Club, which began at the school's founding. The club consisted of junior girls who gave up their study hall periods every week to work as assistants to the librarians. Their work was a combination of filing, covering, and labeling books. It was also because of those girls that the library was able to have evening hours. They also

published a Literary Journal that contained book reviews. In the 1967-1968 school year, the Library Club set out to help the Advanced Placement students. It had come to their attention that extensive research is often required for those classes. Because of this the club put together the sources that the students would need, such as books, pamphlets, and magazines. Again the library was made to be open late in the afternoon so that students could continue to utilize the facilities. In the 1968-1969 year the girls in the club were responsible for the circulation of books, pamphlets, and magazines, as well as spending their study halls maintaining the library so that it would remain efficient and useful. In the school year 1971-1972 there was a boy who was a part of the Library Club, but it remained overwhelmingly female, which revealed the segregated and gendered nature of extracurricular activities at this time. The Library Club held a tea every year before the school year started so that the teachers could come in and see any of the new books for the year so that they could familiarize themselves with what was available for their students to use. The Library Club was very short lived, as the last yearbook to have a mention of it is the yearbook for the 1975-1976 school year. The club also gradually gets less of a

mention in the yearbook as it goes from betting a paragraph explaining what it is to just having a picture and a label. By the last year it was called the Library Squad. The Library Club is an important part of the library's history and is needed to understand how the library functions and how important it is to the school as a whole.

Over the years there has also been plenty of legislation involving school libraries. This includes budgets, the sharing of resources, and the material that was allowed to be placed on the shelves for the students to access. In 1964 federal support for libraries was provided through the Library Services and Construction Act. Part of its purpose was to promote interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing among all types of libraries. Support changes in 1996 when the Library Services and Technology Act replaced LSCA. LSTA's purpose was to consolidate Federal library service programs, stimulate excellence and promote access to learning and information resources in all types of libraries for all, and to promote library services that provide all users with access to information through State, regional, national, and international electronic networks. It was also to link libraries and to promote targeted services to all types of

people in all types of situations. Libraries are important structures that are instrumental in the education of students. Library legislation has been an important part of keeping school libraries going by making sure that they were funded and kept within the grasp of high school students so that they could benefit from having access to important resources.

Along with the school libraries students also have access to public libraries within their communities. As Kennedy High School gets students from both Merrick and Bellmore it can be said that students from the school have them as resources when needed. The Merrick library works with the school as well as the community. Every summer the Merrick library has shelves filled with summer reading books from grades 7 to 12. This helps students as they can easily access the books that they need to complete their schoolwork. The library also has a plethora of events that people from the community can participate in. These activities reach all parts of the community as well as all ages. Some of these events include writing workshops, book clubs, yoga, and family story time. These events tie the library closely to the Merrick community and make it an integral part of people's lives. The Bellmore library is much the same

concerning events for the community. Their programs range from book clubs to baby music time to movie nights. All of these library programs were designed to benefit their library's community and to bring people together.

Another reason for the importance of the school library is the technology inside of it. The library has grown since its establishment in ways of technology. Inside of the library there are computers that can access databases for research as well as writing papers. There are also printers that students can use at their discretion to print their work. Everything is online now instead of having to be stored in things such as microfilm or microfiche, these devices being shrunk down versions of documents in order for easy storage. Kennedy only recently got rid of their supply of microfilm to free up storage space as they are now obsolete due to storage on computers and the internet. All of this technology makes the library more efficient and useful for students and encourages them to use it as much as they want as it is quicker and easier than anywhere else in the school.

The library at JFK has always been important. It is an integral part of student life and as such is an important part of the

school. It has grown with the students as well as the outside world to become more useful and ready for student use. The information that is accessible from the library has also grown with the addition of computers and other resources that have been made available to the library for student use. This includes the internet with databases for students to get information from as well as to write with to complete assignments. The library is a central part of school life at Kennedy High School and as such is one of its most important features and resources.

15

A Brief History of Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers (BMUST)

Sean Nanos



BMUST

Widespread teaching reforms were passed in the 1800s which led to a growing public school system and increased training of teachers. Soon after, teachers grouped together to fight for better wages and

benefits, and this marked the beginnings of teacher unions. The fight for teachers' rights began on a national scale with the creation of the National Education Association in 1857. The National

Education Association worked in its earliest years to fight against salary inequality and the mistreatment of teachers. When compulsory public schooling became widespread in the United States by the 1920s, there was no protection for the teachers. Teacher pay was dictated by administrators, and they were not given sufficient time off or other benefits that are commonplace today. There was also concern for the conditions of classrooms for both students and teachers. Meanwhile, on Long Island, John F. Kennedy High School was founded in Bellmore in the 1960s, and its teachers were, and still are, protected by Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers (BMUST). While its objectives have remained constant, BMUST has changed its practices since its origin to present day. From fighting for increased salaries and smaller classrooms in the 1960s and 1970s, BMUST now works closely with Bellmore-Merrick High School District and Board of Education to support the annual school budget, protect student and teacher rights, and promote public education through traditional and social media.

In an interview I conducted with former BMUST President Michael Dolber, and discussed the history of BMUST from the

1970s to the 2000s. He recounted that early teacher union goals included improving their salaries, benefits, and working conditions. BMUST become more involved in educational leadership through contractual committees in the district, professional development, and other means. Additionally, he helped BMUST improve its relationships with the District and the Board of Education, which thought the union was a nuisance at first. As the president of BMUST, Mr. Dolber put an emphasis on social issues such as trying to get recognition in the contract for domestic partners being eligible for health insurance, which became especially important when marriage equality became legal in New York State. BMUST used protests, newspaper articles, letter writing, phone calls, and it appealed to the PTA and community for support on its issues. During the Great Recession of 2008, BMUST had to make temporary concessions to save the jobs of some teachers. As president, Mr. Dolber wanted to improve the diversity of the teaching staff in the BMCHSD because the District was predominantly white. Mr. Dolber's insight helped to detail a transition of BMUST over time.

Teacher unions can affect the way that administrators run schools including

funding of classes and treatment of students. Teacher unions can have a large impact on students and school systems in general, although they are often portrayed in a negative manner by the media, which describes them as nuisances that disturb student learning. The actual effect of teacher unions on student learning is vague because it happens on federal, state, and district levels. There are so many factors that affect them such as legislation and politicians, so it is difficult to objectively report their effects. However, clearly teacher unions are passionate about helping all parties involved in their work.

Teacher unions became more powerful after a merger between the National Education Association and the New York State United Teachers. This merger gave teacher unions in New York, especially the wealthy ones like the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District, more influence in the districts in which they participated. Teachers unions in New York State are adapting to new changes in education such as uniting against standardized testing regulations. There is large push by public education advocates to eliminate the use of standardized testing in the United States. NYSUT has supported local teacher unions in their

fight against standardized testing by hosting rallies and marches. The merger only helped teacher unions across New York State by giving them a statewide power to unite under.

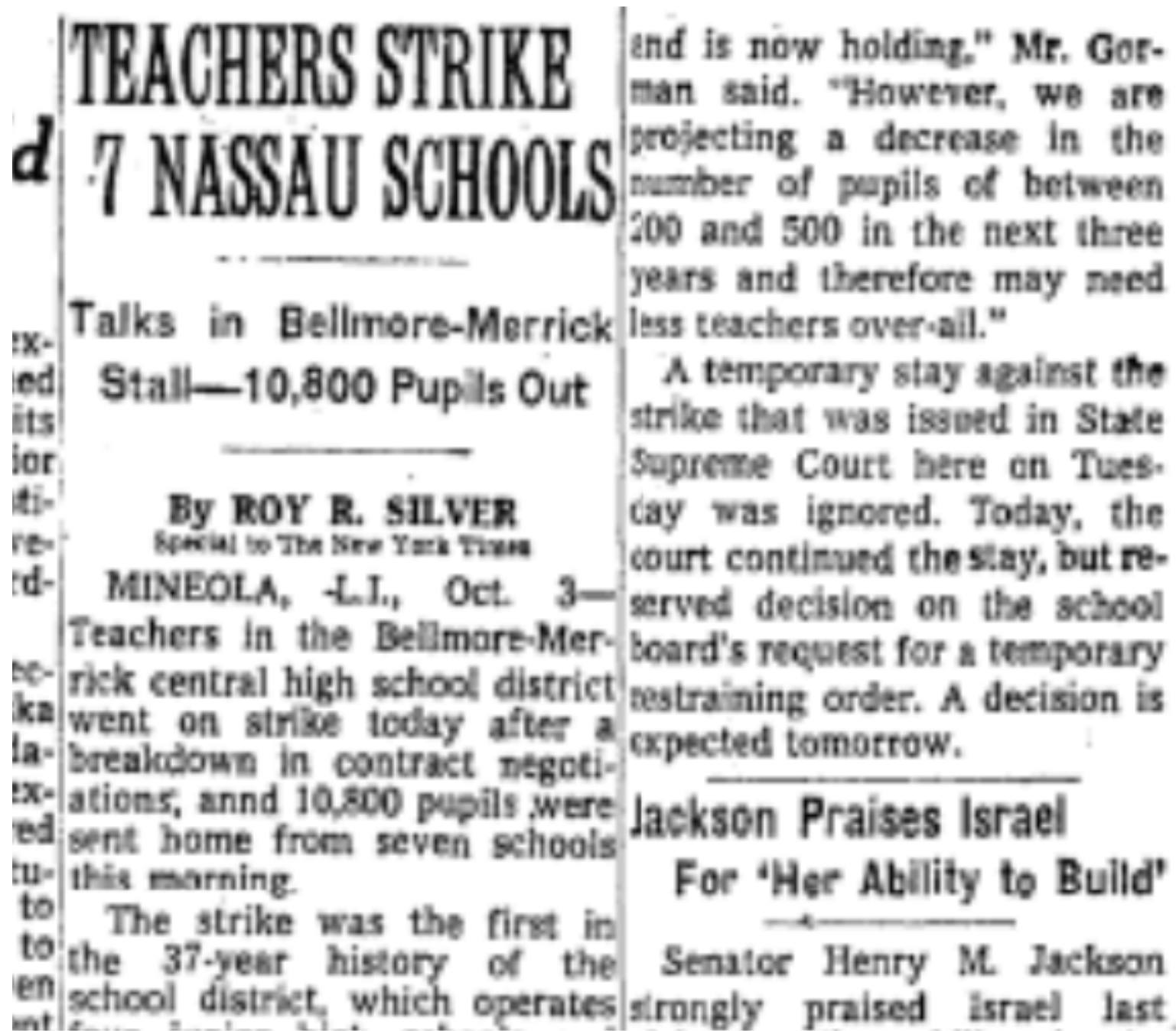
Administrators and teacher argue over the impact that teacher unions have on the educational performance of its students. Some teachers believe that they benefit both teachers and students while some administrators think that they are solely a nuisance which district parents and students alike. A recent article in the Harvard Educational Review discusses the impact that teacher unions have on educational performance by evaluating grades and attitudes. The authors used data from the American College Testing Program and the College Entrance Examination Board for statistics about the SAT and ACT scores to explore the relationship between teacher unions and standardized testing scores. Teacher unions are often given a poor reputation from the media such as inciting violence or laziness in students, and some people argue that teacher unions create conflict between workers and management. Administrators and teacher unions may never get along unless they can find a way to meet both of their interests.

In conclusion, teacher unions have developed a lot since their origins with the creation of the National Education Association in 1857. Their strength and influence depended on the district that they were working in and the cooperation amongst the teachers in them. Fortunately, in the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District, teachers were able to group together and form the teacher union BMUST which started by advocating for teachers' rights and better salaries. Over time, BMUST became more involved in the community by working with the Board of Education to support the budget and improve student rights through social media and more organized events. The evolution of BMUST contributed to the resounding success of the BMCHSD and all of its students, teachers, faculty, and parents.

16

The Teacher Strike of 1974

William Sasson



In the past fifty years of John F. Kennedy High School's history, there have been many disagreements between the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District's Board of Education and the

Teachers Union, Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers (BMUST). These issues are due to differences in opinions about teacher contracts, which need to be renewed every few years. In the history of

the district a teacher strike only occurred once, even though there were a few other occasions when strikes almost erupted. In the past fifty years of Kennedy High School, the teachers have participated in an array of union activities, including the Bellmore-Merrick United Secondary Teachers Strike in 1974, which kept class sizes from getting too large, allowing the school to continue its high level of academic excellence.

Besides the October 1974 strike, there were several more disagreements between the teacher union and the school district. Two of the closest occasions to a strike were in October of 1971 and October of 1972. Although there were disagreements, negotiations led to increased teacher salaries. The teachers in the district were not always pleased with their contract, forcing arguments with the school board, but they were fortunate to have contracts, unlike teachers in many neighboring school districts. Having a contract was a luxury due to the teachers having a form of job security, but it also meant that the teacher union had to negotiate with the school district about the expectations of the teachers, which is what occurred during the strike in October of 1974.

The district's only teacher union strike began at 1:05 AM on October 3, 1974, due to the school district's changing the teacher contract regarding maximum class sizes, which the district removed for economic reasons. The district hoped to save money by having larger classes, which would allow for a smaller staff of teachers. The increase in students each teacher would have would create a larger work load per teacher, which would minimize the attention from teachers to each student, leading to a poorer education. The school district stated that the school knew that smaller classes were better for the education of students, but was in need for economic relief from the past years where there was a need for an increase of teachers in the district. For example, the district needed to have an additional thirty classes for the 1974-75 school year. Besides the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District, similar situations were occurring in the West Hempstead, Mineola, Plainedge and Seaford school districts. None of these school districts were affected by strikes, because these school districts and teacher unions were able to negotiate a resolution.

On the first day of the strike, the district allowed students to enter the building, hoping the teachers would leave the picket

lines. Teachers remained outside picketing, which led to students being sent home around 9:00 AM. During the strike, the district needed to administer Regents Scholarship Exams for 1,300 high school students, but did not have the teachers to administer the exams. With the support from volunteers to proctor the exams, the three high schools were able to administer their exams.

Almost all the district's teachers participated in the strike, with only six of the district's 646 teachers crossing the picket line. According to Michael Dolber, a retired teacher who participated in the strike and who served as BMUST's president in the 2000s, the relationships between the majority of the teachers who decided to strike and the few who did not strike were harmed for a prolonged time. The few teachers who crossed the picket line and reported for work were harassed by the teachers on the picket line on their way into the building. These teachers were called "scabs" by teachers who participated in the strike and were told they should be "flushed down the toilet." The teachers who were on strike seemed to be more angered by the teachers who choose not to take part in the strike than they were at the district. In fact, police were required to restrain teachers who

were a part of the strike from lunging at the car of Mrs. Levine, one of the teachers who crossed the picket line.

The district's taxpayers were not pleased with the strike. At the conclusion of most strikes, employees usually get a pay increase, which angered many taxpayers. Before the strike occurred, the district's budget had a \$1.4 million deficit. Many taxpayers were annoyed that the teachers were fighting against the district's attempt to minimize the expense on teachers, due to the increase that in school taxes that would occur. One teacher, Mrs. Friedlander, who taught in the district for almost twenty years when the strike occurred, stated that she was fighting for the future students. Mrs. Friedlander stated that she and the other 645 striking teachers wanted the future students to receive quality education, like the quality education her children received when they were in the school district. Teachers knew that they would not be able to provide quality education with more than thirty students in a class. Some parents understood that the teachers were fighting for the students so they would receive education to the level of excellence the school was known for and still is to this date. These parents demonstrated their

support by bringing coffee for the teachers on the picket line.

Students had mixed feelings about the strike. Most of the district's 10,800 students enjoyed their thirteen day break from school. Many students played sports at the abandoned schools' fields, where some of the students took action. On Friday, October 11, almost 200 students met at the Merrick Train station to march to the district's offices at Calhoun High School to try to persuade the district's board and the heads of the teacher union to make a quicker decision. The group of students was organized by the seven schools' student governments. The turnout impressed parents and district administrators, but some of the students who participated wished there was a greater amount of students. These students who showed up did not care which way the agreement fell, and they held signs stating, "Any classes are better than no classes."

During the strike, many of the teachers believed that the district wanted the teachers to go on strike. The teachers thought so because the deficit in the school's budget along with several board members not attending the negotiation meeting that the teacher union had. The

deficit in the district's budget grabbed the attention of many teachers because when on strike, the teachers were harmed by New York State's Taylor Law. The Taylor Law fines any public employee who participates in a strike for two days pay for every day the individual is not at work due to participation in the strike. Since the total fines over the 7 days that the 640 teachers did not report to work brought the deficit from about \$1.4 M to just shy of \$200,000, teachers were angry. When the teacher union president brought up the charge to the board, one of the board members, Kenneth Ashworth, called the claim ridiculous, and he sarcastically stated that the school board only needed two more days of keeping the teachers on strike to cover the budget. Each day of the strike, the striking teacher population was fined \$108,000 a day, or about \$170 a teacher. The teachers faced many financial problems from these fines, which led to the district setting up loans for teachers in need to make up for the fines.

Throughout the strike, teachers did many things to get attention from the public to increase the public's knowledge why they were on strike. They held picket signs outside of all the district's buildings. As well, they picketed in front of some of the board member's houses. One of the board

members, Harriet Luce, was negatively affected by the teachers when they were striking in front of their house. The board member's son, Allan, 23, allegedly pointed a gun towards the teachers when they were outside the family's house. In the police report, there was no mention about the gun. Harriet Luce stated that she did not know her son owned a gun, as well that her son was wrong and that she was not home to stop him when he did so, and did not think she would of been able to if she was home. Due to this event, she resigned from her position on the board due to her not feeling she would be an effective board member since her being distracted by her family. During her resignation, she stated that she lost all respect for the teachers due to their actions. One of the teachers outside of the house, Michael Dolber, remembers the event but did not feel threatened by the gun, but stated in times like today, where gun violence is much more common, he would have been.

After thirteen days of striking, seven of them being school days, the BMUST and the board finally agreed on the information from the fact-finder. The new contract was similar to the one that had expired June 30, 1974. The contract was signed at 3:00 AM due to the school's board and the

teacher union needing to vote in favor of the findings. Ten of the 13 board members voted in favor of the final fact-finder's report, and 503 of the 585 voting teachers voted in favor. There were several changes that occurred, including increased wages, added job security and modified conditions for one section of any given class. The increased wages would change anywhere from 7.5-9% during the duration of the contract, due to rising living expenses. The highest paid teachers would now be paid at the top 33% mark for Nassau County teachers.

The strike of a majority of the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District's teachers in 1974 has helped John F. Kennedy, along with the other schools in the district to be known to have great academics. In recent years, this excellence has been displayed by the school's many electives, especially the most well known elective, the Advanced Science Research Program. The program has produced many great scientific research projects, which have been recognized in prestigious scientific research competitions. The great success that has come out of this elective, with a much higher teacher to student ratio than was being argued over in 1974, might not of been a possibility without the sacrifices the teachers made during the

17

How Technology has Changed Education at John F. Kennedy High School

Hunter Scheinkopf



Computer technology has transformed schools. In 1984, MIT Professor Seymour Papert wrote, “There won’t be schools in the future... I think the computer will blow up the school. That is, the school defined

as something where there are classes, teachers running exams, people structured in groups by age, following a curriculum — all of that” That was a prediction of how computer technology would affect schools

in the future by a researcher and professor of computer sciences, and while technology has not fully taken over today's education, there is no denying that technology plays a critical part of today's education process. Over the past 25 years, the integration and improvement of technology at John F. Kennedy High School have been important to the education of students.

In the 1990s computers were being introduced into education and for use by students on a wider scale. Student access at the beginning of the decade was limited in secondary schools, with only 40 percent of schools across the United States having computers. In addition, teachers did not dedicate much time to using computers. Among the students who had computers in secondary education, about 13 percent of those students would use every week. By the middle of the decade, 98 percent of schools would have computers, but the student-to-computer ratio was 10 to 1 nationally, and that number was worse among schools with minority and low-income populations, such as poorer areas that were receiving Title 1 funds from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. In the mid-1990s, access to the Internet was becoming more widely available, and companies like Google were

getting started. This new access to information would also go to schools. The national percentage of schools with Internet access was at 64 percent, but in New York the rate was only 50 percent. For schools that did have Internet access, only about half of teachers would ever use the computer. Schools and students that did use computers would use them for different reasons, such as improving computer literacy and teaching programming instruction. The subject areas in which computers were most used were English and social studies.

Kennedy High School followed some of these trends in the 1990s. The school did not have network at first, but the technology program had a few computers and one printer. Many students did have knowledge of how to use computers, knowledge they brought with them from elementary school. According to Mrs. Donna Hanna, who has been an information technologist at Kennedy High School for over 20 years, the school was behind because it had a lack of computers, no network or Internet connection, and only one printer in use. Kennedy High School also followed the national trends in usage for computers by students, as they were used for writing and for clubs, like the Yearbook Club,

which would use them to publish the annual Kennedy yearbook. In the 1999 Kennedy Yearbook, there is a picture for the Yearbook Club in which there is only one computer visible.

At the turn of the century, schools would get better access to computer technology, and Kennedy High School followed suit. The problem now was that schools did not know how to integrate computer technology into the curriculum. Schools were beginning to spend large amounts of money to wire the school and purchase computer technology, but teachers still did not use the computers. One reason was a lack of teacher training in technology integration. In Kennedy High School, because the community's high socioeconomic status, the network improved and more personal computers were added. The students and teachers of Kennedy adapted to this influx of technology because students had used it in elementary school. According to Mrs. Hanna, there has been some staff pushback however, especially when it came to the use of new programs for taking attendance and entering grades. Many teachers were used to do things a certain way and had grade books and a system that would work for them, so the

move to a new standard system was met with pushback.

Over the past decade, modern computer technology has infiltrated classrooms nationally. The federal government provides over \$3 billion to schools to provide affordable Internet access to poorer areas and resources for students and teachers. The private sector has also contributed up to \$8 billion, to get teachers and students to use their new. In New York State, the Smart Schools bond was passed to give over \$2 billion to public schools that provided a detailed plan for incorporating new technology. However, there has been some backlash to the increased use of technology in schools. Some people argue that there are more distractions for students, such as social media and video games.

Kennedy High School has also become more involved in technology over the last ten years. The Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District has presented a Smart School proposal worth about \$2 million, which would provide the 5 schools in the district which would provide 476 desktops, 510 laptops and 250 tablets to help students learn. To help with the integration of technology, the district has created tech mentor positions in each

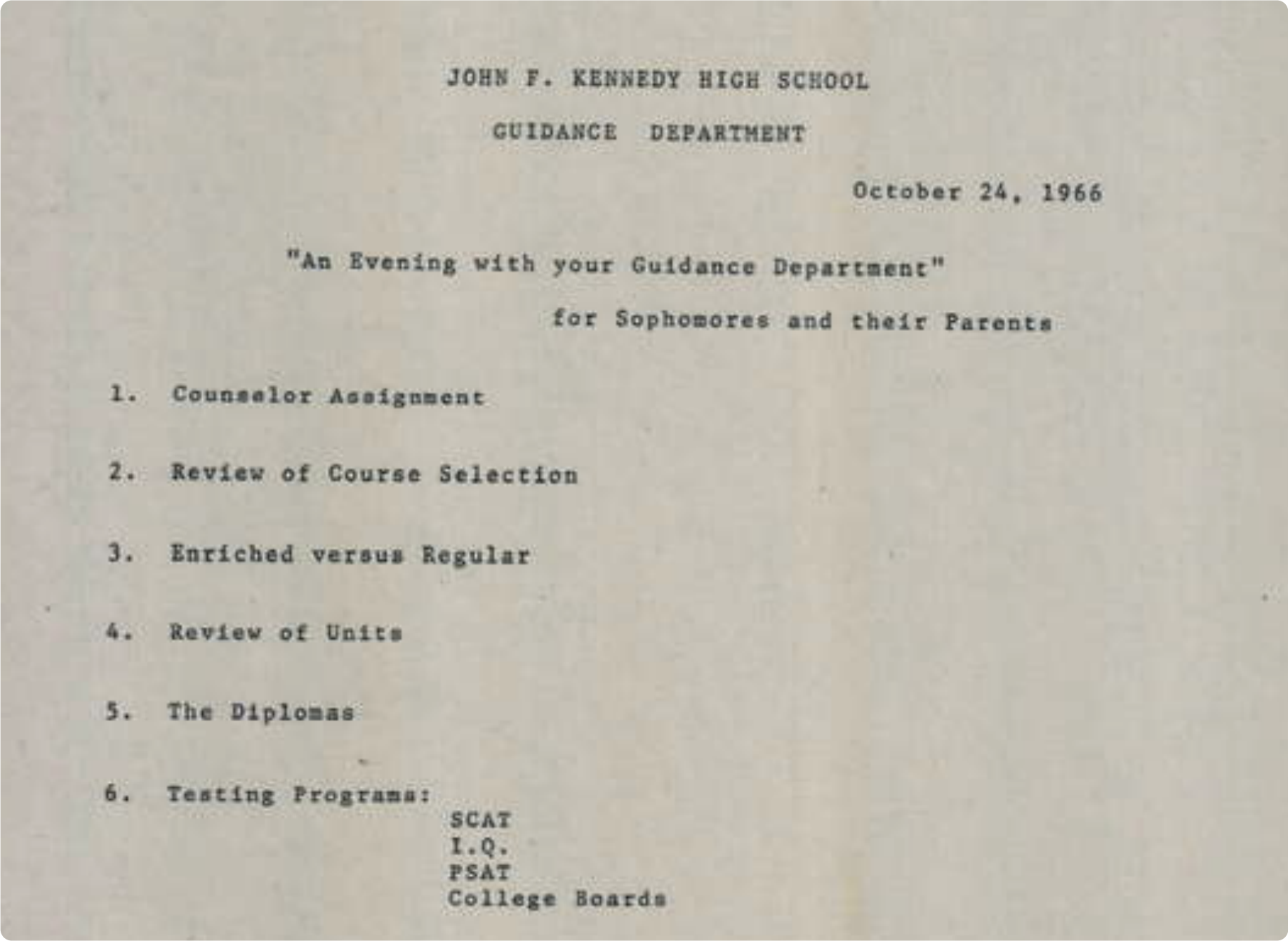
building, who help train teachers, hold workshops, and answer teachers' questions about technology. The district has also introduced the Bring Your Own Device policy, which allows this policy students to bring in iPads and mobile devices for use in class. In order try to prevent distractions while using these personal devices, there have been rules in place, including that students have to use the school network to block distracting sites. Technology has changed the way schools educate students. Schools have provided computer resources and Internet access to students, and have worked to integrate them into schools. Kennedy High School's technology program has followed national trends and found ways to improve on them.

PART 3 - CURRICULUM

18

Advanced Placement Classes: Advancing Your Mind Or Your Stress Levels?

Rebecca Epstein



Advanced Placement Classes have existed since the post-World War II era, but John F. Kennedy High School incorporated them into their curriculum much later. Currently at John F. Kennedy High School, 57% of

students are enrolled in at least one AP class and 88% of those students passed the AP Exam (receiving a score of three and above), which are very large percentages compared to past years. The

Advanced Placement program has now completely flourished, and is an integral part of students' learning experience not only at John F. Kennedy High School, but across the United States of America.

The formation of the Advanced Placement (AP) program began after the Second World War, in the 1950s. The College Board, which created the Advanced Placement program, explains how the AP program was first invented as a pilot program following World War II. In recent years, it has added many subjects and is implemented in a large number of high schools. After World War II, the disparity between secondary and higher education grew, and it needed to be reduced. At the time, two studies were being conducted about this very topic. In the first study, three educators from elite prep schools (Andover, Exeter, and Lawrenceville) joined forces with three prestigious universities (Harvard, Princeton, and Yale) to get motivated high-school seniors to participate in college-level work, and be well-prepared for college. The second study involved the Committee on Admission with Advanced Standing, which formed a plan that would allow high school students to take college-level classes. The students would also be able to get college credit for these advanced classes. In 1952,

a pilot program was established with 11 subjects, and by the 1955-56 school year, the program was under way, officially becoming the College Board Advanced Placement Program.

As the years have progressed, the number of participating students has increased.

Every year, the College Board releases statistics of the student score distributions in each subject. The In May 2013, 2,218,578 students from 18,920 secondary schools participated in taking at least one College Board AP Test. The most popular topic was the English Language test, with a whopping 476,277 students, but only 55% of the students received a 3 or higher on the exam. The median score was a 2.77. According to the College Board website, a score of 3 means that the student is qualified, whereas a 2 or 1 signifies that the student is possibly qualified or the College Board has no recommendation. So that means 45% of students were possibly qualified or scored so low that the College Board does not even give credentials.

The Advanced Placement program forces students to challenge themselves in their studies. Alejandra Matos of the Washington Post writes that many students in Washington D.C. public

schools are challenging themselves and taking AP courses. Although many schools have a low passing rate, the students are still trying, which shows a positive change towards education in recent years. This implementation can possibly help thousands of students could graduate earlier from college, thus paying less tuition, and allow them to immerse themselves in subjects that they might have otherwise ignored.

Passing rates on Advanced Placement courses are also increasing, nearly doubling in ten years. This is a positive statistic because more students are having access to further their education, and are using it to benefit their lives for something that will not only be a positive impact for themselves but also the community. Brown University, one of the eight prestigious Ivy League Universities, lists the requirements that students should have on AP exams to receive credit for an introductory course and to generally impress/meet the standards of admissions. The majority of scores that one should receive is a 5 (the highest score possible on an Advanced Placement exam) revealing the high standards of the school and the required expectations that the students should not only meet, but surpass so the school will be impressed by them. These

astronomically high expectations cause intense pressure on students to not only take the classes but to also achieve the score that Brown needs. Colleges use AP exams to test the student's intelligence on a certain subject, and influences if they are admitted into the college/university. It should not be something that students should be heavily concerned because the program was designed so students can receive college credit in high school, and be ahead. Now, it is transforming into something that is required of students so they can go to college, which greatly differentiates from the Advanced Placement program's initial purpose.

Many high-schoolers know that AP classes now have a strong influence on getting admitted to a university, and feel that they do not know which classes to take. I conducted an interview with a member of the Guidance Department at John F. Kennedy High School to find out information specifically related to the school. I spoke to my guidance counselor, Ms. Keely Coco, who is new to the school (this is her first year) but has worked in different school districts for three years combined. She said, "In my experience the attitudes have changed tremendously for the better.... In the past, the few AP courses offered were only allowed for a

select few and it was always seen as a more elite group. Now, because of the variety and increase of subject matter and the ability to offer to more students.” Over time, students are getting used to the increased workload, allowing them to do better in school. To be accepted into a prestigious college, students must participate and excel in AP classes. Currently at John F. Kennedy High School, an important part of senior year is not only getting accepted into a college/university, but also its name and amount of prestige it holds. Ms. Coco continued, “I believe the students are pushing themselves and value how much the transcript portrays this by the AP courses taken, and that more students opt to take the AP class if given a choice.” Honor students are embracing the life of AP classes, and are optionally choosing to participate in an extremely rigorous course load. Not only was there an increase of AP class subjects and an increase in the amount of times they were offered during the school day, but the number of students who were selected to take these classes has increased.

At John F. Kennedy High School, there is a large percentage of students taking Advanced Placement courses. According to US News and World Report, in the

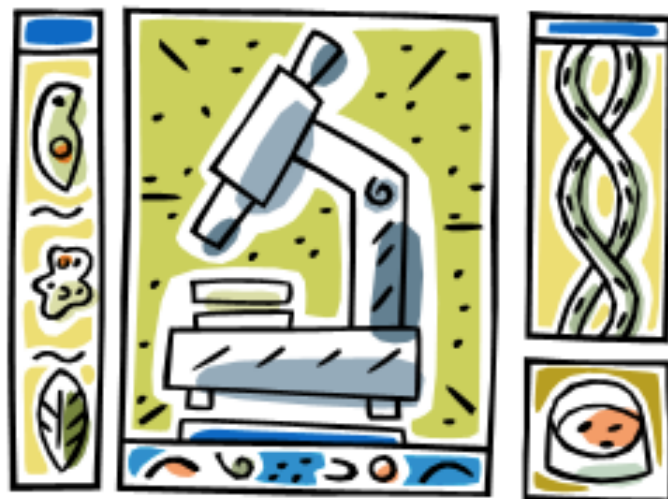
2015-2016 year, 57% of Kennedy students took at least one AP class and 88% of these students passed at least one test. When schools are rated across the country, a major component is the Advanced Placement class passing rate and enrollment rate. John F. Kennedy High School is giving students the opportunity not only to challenge themselves with a more rigorous course load, and improving its national rankings. For the 2016-2017 year, Kennedy gave all seniors the opportunity to take an AP English class (AP English Language). For many students, this class was their first Advanced Placement course, increasing the school’s percentage of students who are taking AP classes. This shows that Advanced Placement courses are taking over many aspects of the education system.

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The Evolution of Science Education in New York State and John F. Kennedy High School

Hayley Tesser

The Living Environment



John. F. Kennedy High School Laboratory Manual

Beginning in elementary school, students are introduced to a variety of subject areas, and as they get older based on their interests these subject areas become more refined and teach specific material. After

the Second World War, the United States entered the Cold War with the Soviet Union. After the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite, the United States realized they were lagging behind with their

advancements in science and science education. In the aftermath of Sputnik, the United States embarked on the Space Race and sought to revamp science education and advance its technology. The changes to science education can be examined on a local level, studying schools from Long Island. After the Sputnik there has been constant work on advancing the science achievements and ensuring the power of the United States. Examining John F. Kennedy High School, it is evident that since its opening in the mid 1960s and through today there has been a continuous effort to advance science education through changing the curriculum, graduation requirements, and teaching methods. From the 1960s to present day, science education at Kennedy High School has continued to evolve following major events, advancements in technology, and the development of new curriculum and teaching methods.

Following World War II, the United States entered the Cold War with the Soviet Union. The Cold War was a constant back and forth between the US and Soviets to determine who was superior. The Space Race stemmed from the rivalry in the Cold War and compared the scientific capabilities of each country. The Soviet Union were the first to launch their satellite

Sputnik into space. After the Soviet launch of Sputnik the United States began to realize that they were lagging behind with their scientific advancements and education, prompting the United States to begin reform programs. The United States became more aware of the importance of higher education. Sputnik provided the spark that increased government support and funding of American Universities. From Sputnik, the United States took on a new approach to learning and scientific inquiry which translated to changes made in the science curriculum of high schools. With each of the Soviet successes, the United States desire to reform their education increased demanding the eventual reevaluation of the American science curriculum. The events in the Cold War translated to advances in science in the classroom to help advance the United States.

The 1960s were referred to as the golden age for scientific advancements due to all the reforms that were being made. In schools, new science curricula were put in place. More student participation was encouraged in combination with new teaching methods and hands-on laboratory activities. Along with the new science curriculums came revised standardized tests. In New York State,

students took Regents Exams. In the 1960s, the exams asked students basic questions with few abstractions. Students were required to recall basic facts and definitions. The format of the exams reflected the simple technology of the time with no separate answer sheet or scantron, small fonts with questions close together, and formal language.

Additionally, on these exams there were no short answers, and no diagrams or visuals used. Towards the mid 1960s there was a shift towards the more humanistic view of science. This humanistic view of science appealed to a variety of students, and led to curriculum changes allowing teachers to alter their classes and material taught to help their students gain more of an interest on the subject. Additionally, reforms such as the Harvard Physics Project were also used to adjust the high school science curriculums and make them more appealing to the students in effort to draw more attention to science and the science classes. As the enthusiasm for science increased amongst the students, scientific competitions became more popular. These competitions honored and acknowledged students for their scientific achievements. In an early science competition sixty-five students from the Nassau County area were praised for their scientific achievements. The 1960s education

reforms were focused on altering science education for social and personal needs.

The 1970s were a great departure from the science education approaches of the 1960s. There was less of a focus on the humanistic side of science education, and more of a focus on academics and obtaining knowledge. The amount of reforms decreased as the money from federal agencies began to run out. In addition, the federal government and many scientists took a step back from the high school science curriculum, allowing teachers and other educators to adopt their own ideas to the curriculum. With science education turning away from the humanistic views of science, there was more pressure placed on students to succeed in school. High schools set higher expectations for their students which came with strict diploma requirements and difficult courses which were associated with new classroom practices. High schools began by increasing the number of classes required for graduation. The New York Board of Regents approved a new curriculum increasing participation in science and world language courses. Many states began requiring students to take classes in math, English, social studies, arts or world languages, and the sciences to be eligible for graduation. The

high schools and federal programs wanted to advance the curriculum and levels of education in high schools to better prepare students for colleges and universities, and to allow students to become prepared to acquire jobs and begin careers. Originally at high schools in New York there was a required one year of math and science for graduation, by the late 1970s this evolved to two required years of math and science. However, for students, in New York State, seeking the more rigorous Regents Diploma three years of both math and science are required.

To keep up with the strict graduation requirements, the growing technology, and rigorous curriculums the New York State Board of Regents and Regents Exams experienced great changes. In the 1970s the science Regents Exams began to reflect the exams given today. The exams used answer sheets, pages with two columns of questions, a clearer font with more space allotted for students to be able to work. The questions required more abstract thinking there were not as many questions that asked basic fact recall they were also more specific requiring students to have advanced knowledge of the area of study. The test consisted of over one hundred multiple choice questions, and for the first time visuals such as graphs,

charts and diagrams were used. The Regents Exams and the material tested correlated to what the students learned in the classroom. These exams tested the mastery of students in the subject area. Throughout the 1970s high school enrollment in science courses increased significantly with more students striving to graduate with the more advanced Regents Diploma.

During the 1980s, science education was primarily concerned with new technologies and economic incentives. Plans were set to provide basic science education to most Americans through the schooling system. The science curriculum was remodeled and based on inquiry and the nature of science. The 1980s focused on perfecting the teaching of science and advancing technology, this was a departure from the previous decades of reform and remodeling. During the 80's individual state governments stiffened graduation requirements for high schools and worked to alter the science curriculum to meet the new technologies and needs of the students. Technology brought new perspectives and ways of learning to many high schools. New technology advanced the science labs in many schools which allowed students to go further in depth in their scientific studies. To match new

school requirements, F. James Rutherford created Project 2061 which was a program that combated scientific illiteracy and reform of science education practices in high schools. Additionally, The National Science Education Standards Project provided regulation and standards for teaching, content and assessment. Specifically, In New York State at the high school level Regents Examinations are distributed to students at the conclusion of the school year to test the student's mastery. The science Regents Examinations experienced some notable upgrades during the 80's. The exams featured more charts, graphs, and pictures all of which were more detailed and were of better quality. The New York State Board of Regents added the use of the reference tables for Earth Science and Chemistry, scantrons and other forms of answer sheets were used to speed up the grading process. Another main difference was that the questions asked began to have a larger range in difficulty to fit the number of questions, during the 80's there was over one hundred multiple choice questions. The new statewide regulations on science education affected the New York State Regents Examinations and the teaching of science.

During this time, participation and interest in science increased as science clubs and electives became more popular. A science lab from the 1980s at Kennedy High School shows many different small tables that served as lab benches, a variety of science posters with different graphs, charts, and diagrams. There are see through cabinets containing various pieces of glassware and tools, with a variety of different chemicals. On the back table there are many microscopes and different pieces of equipment for labs. Similarly, an additional group picture of the Science club is shown. The Science Club consisted of mostly men with one girl, and the instructor was an older male, demonstrating the existence of a gender gap in science education. On the table in front of the group an experiment is set up and throughout the classroom are different science posters and charts. Additionally, Kennedy had a Science Research Club where students conducted experiments and researched information to find answers and theories to more complex questions and problems. In a picture a girl and a boy are working diligently on an experiment. The Research Club carried out experiments in the subjects of biology, botany, and physics. The club participated in a variety of science competitions, and publish a newsletter to inform the rest of

Kennedy High School on their scientific discoveries. With the creation of new programs and additions to the curriculum, the 1980s focused on inquiry and the nature of science while focusing on improved technology and new scientific evidence.

With the 1990s came even more advances in technology. The better technology made textbooks more prevalent. The textbooks had better content to match the curriculum of the high schools and correlated to the material tested on the Regents Examinations. The National Science Standards became more important and were followed by many book writers and school districts. Students performance on standardized exams became another driving factor for the increased focus on science. For the Regents Examinations there are many continuities between the exams given in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the 1990s examinations contained even more visuals with more abstract questions. One main difference in the 90's was that science education began to become even more serious amongst the high schools and high school students. The focus was on science education for future careers in science and preparing students for higher level courses and course work in colleges and universities. Documents such

as The Benchmarks for Science Literacy had a major impact in the creation of science textbooks and the curriculum. These documents made the high school textbooks and curriculum align allowing students to use the textbooks more frequently and obtain knowledge on their own. With Kennedy, during the 1990s participation in the science club increased more students and more females are depicted. In the 1990s the passion for science amongst students increased, Long Island high schools were recognized for their advances in the subject of science. The praise that Long Island schools received for their work in science helped to emphasize the growing importance of the field of science as it relates to improvements in the classroom and technology. During the 1990s the amount of reform decreased, but students and teachers grew more passionate about science and began to study it more in depth.

As time went on, new findings added to scientific knowledge, and as times modernized new and improved technology aided the teaching and learning of science. Students participate in an increasing number of labs and different science activities, and teachers are able to teach more specifics about the material. At

Kennedy the popularity of the science classes have increased, for as students get older they have more of a say in the classes they take. Additionally, the focus on standardized testing has increased. Throughout the 2000s there has been an influx in new technologies. Having internet accessibility in the classroom allow teachers to have access to and share more information with their students. Similarly, at Kennedy the science labs are now equipped with Smartboards. The Smartboards are a tool used by most teachers, and they allow teachers an easier way to illustrate and explain what actually happens to their students. Over time the importance of science has increased creating more competition in college and in the job world. With this increased importance comes a greater dependence on grades and testing. Throughout the 2000s the Regents Exams have evolved to include a short answer section. The short answer questions require more analytical thinking. During the 2000s participation in the science club has increased, each year more students join, new experiments are conducted, and there is more of a balance between the participation of girls and boys in the club. Recently, the science club at Kennedy has grown so popular that the club has been participating in science competitions

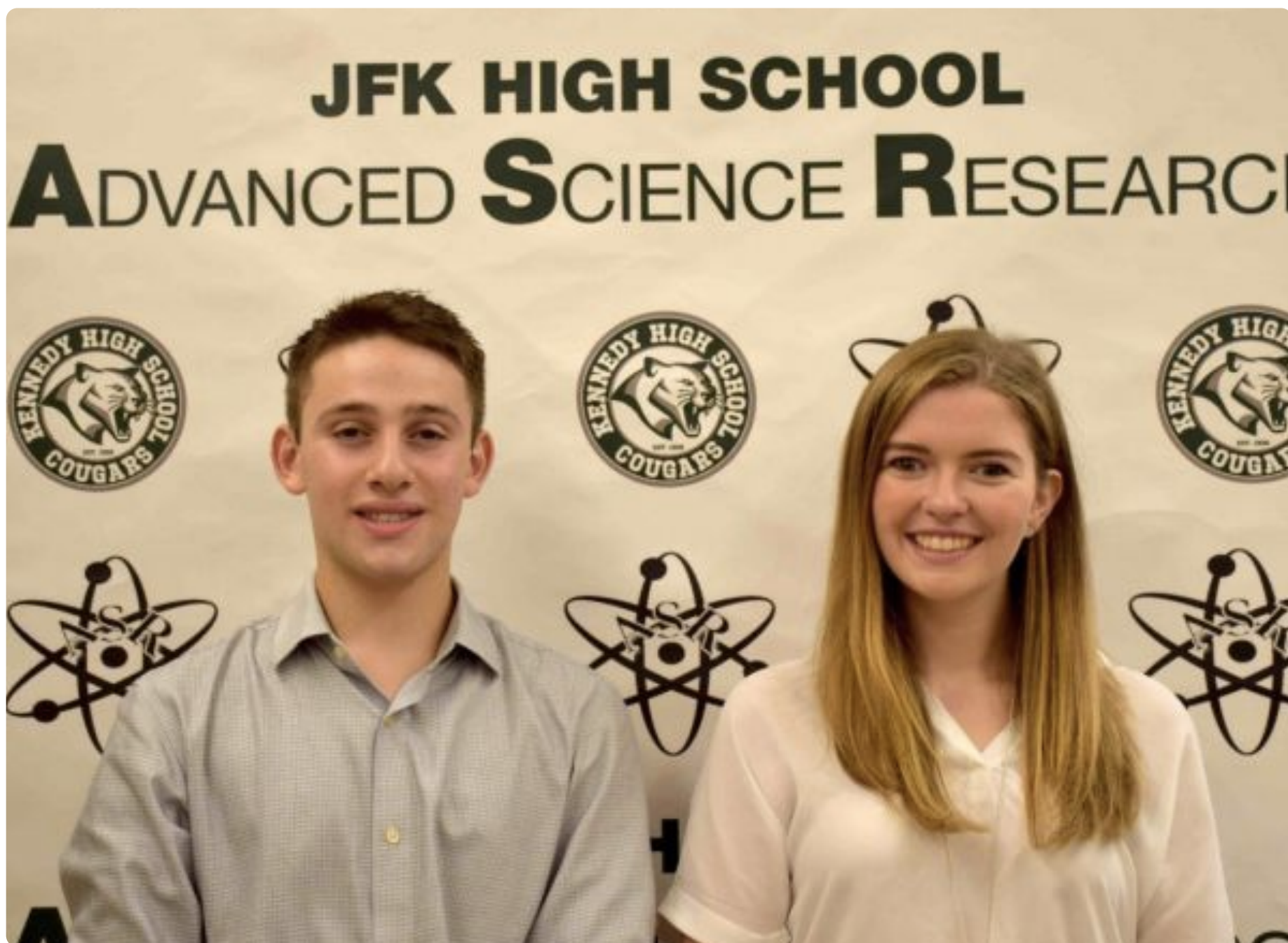
against other high schools. With the continuous development of new technology and growing interest in science, science education has improved drastically meeting the needs and interests of faculty and students.

Since the 1960s the fields of science and science education have experienced major improvements. Throughout each decade following the 60's reforms to curriculum, exams, graduation requirements, and technology have been made. The new improvements have fostered more involvement and interest in the field of science. As seen through the lens of the science club at Kennedy High School, as time has passed there has been an increase in the involvement of both boys and girls in subject of science. This newly developed passion for science has increased enrollment in science classes, and has led to more students pursuing careers in science related fields.

20

Advanced Science Research at John F. Kennedy High School

Thomas Danza



At John F. Kennedy High School, there has been steady growth in the science programs over the past 50 years. While participation in Advanced Placement science courses, science electives, and

extracurriculars has increased, one program is specifically designed for those who enjoy engaging in scientific research. The Advanced Science Research Program (ASR), which began in 2002, has pushed

students to study a scientific topic for three years of high school. It has allowed students to participate in science competitions in New York State and across the country. The Advanced Science Research Program has made a measurable impact on Kennedy's science program.

ASR is designed for students who are dedicated to a field of science and want to work on a research paper for 3 years of high school. However, before the main course, every ASR student takes in an Introduction to Research course in ninth grade, and learns the basics of scientific research. After this course, students apply to the ASR program and, if accepted, takes part in their first year of the course and learn advanced research techniques and select a topic for them to research. In their second year of the science research, students continue to their research and learn about the topic while finding a mentor in the within the same field and learn in great depth about their topic. With a mentor, it allows for the student to learn more about his or her field of choice and gain more first-hand experience by working with others in that field. Having a mentor also helps motivate the student and pushes them to work harder and keep up with that work. During their final year in

the ASR program, students complete their research papers and participate in local and national competitions.

Before the ASR began at Kennedy, students participated in various extracurricular activities related to scientific research. For example, the Science Research Club, which was open to all students, participated in various science competitions, such as the Science Olympiads, and reached the finals in 1988 and 2004. They also participated in the Western Regional Science Competition in 2006, and placed 13 out of 538 schools that participated in the state. In 2006, led by Mr. Lella and Mr. Schleith, it was renamed the Science Club, and has since existed alongside the ASR program.

The ASR at Kennedy High School traces its beginnings to 2001, when Mrs. Barbi Frank was tasked with developing a new departmental program for her administrative license. She introduced the ASR program to replace the school's existing mentorship program, which had allowed students to work with scientists in students' fields of interest. The following year, the ASR program was incorporated into the school's catalog curriculum and offered to sophomores. In my interview with Mrs. Frank, she explained how the

program has been improved over time to fit the needs of the students and to adjust to advancing technology.

One of the programs in which ASR participates is the Regeneron Science Talent Search, formerly sponsored by Intel, the Advanced Science Research program submits to is the Intel Science Talent Search competitions although in the year 2016 they have submitted their work to the Regeneron Science Talent Search. Over the years, Kennedy high school has trained many semifinalists and finalists in these competitions. this competition has awarded many Kennedy The success of the Advanced Research Program has to lead the way too many successful students as well. The Advanced Science Research Program has been around for only a short time and it still has had a large impact on the school and has made an impact on all the students who have participated in the program.

National and International Science Research Recognition

2016-2017

Arin Forstadt

National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium Finalist

Claire Kelly

Junior Science and Humanities Symposium National Representative

Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholar

Jennifer Rakhimov

Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholar

Michael Sternbach

Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholar

Perri Zilberman

National Young Astronomer Award First Place

Siemens Competition Semifinalist

2015-2016

Rachel Mashal

Intel Science Talent Search Finalist

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist

Sarah Moussavi

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2014-2015

Beatrice Brown

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Young Naturalist Awards Finalist and Winner

Jayson Chojar

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Samuel Epstein

Intel Science Talent Search Finalist

Justin Shapiro

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2013-2014

Rachel Abramowitz

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Beatrice Brown

Young Naturalist Awards Finalist

Rebecca Jellinek

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Ben November

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Dean Ostrofsky

Young Naturalist Awards Finalist

2012-2013

Natalie Giovino

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist

Joshua Pollock

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2011-2012

Brett Gossett

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist

Ross Iscowitz

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Ross Shulman

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2010-2011

Joshua Cohen

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Young Naturalist Awards Finalist

Hannah Kremer

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Semifinalist

Gregory Manis

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist

Rachel Saltzman

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Semifinalist

2009-2010

Stefanie Busgang

Neuroscience Research Prize Finalist

Daniel Bornstein

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Barri Bruno

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Semifinalist

Emily Mauser

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Semifinalist

Stephanie Weiner

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2008-2009

Elissa Driggin

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Semifinalist

Joel Goldman

International Sustainable World (Energy, Engineering, and Environment) Project Olympiad

(I-SWEEEP) Finalist

Aria Koumourdass

International Sustainable World (Energy, Engineering, and Environment) Project Olympiad

(I-SWEEEP) Finalist

Olivia Levine

Siemens Competition in Science, Mathematics, and Technology Semifinalist

2007-2008

Cameron Breen

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Finalist

Matthew Klebanoff

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2006-2007

Jamie Forman

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition Finalist

Ali Krimmer

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Scott Peters

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Semifinalist

Allison Saltzman

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Erin Samplin

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Brian Tannenbaum

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2005-2006

Michael Katz

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Semifinalist

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Sara Roberson

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Adam Solomon

Siemens Competition Finalist; Third Place

Intel Science Talent Search Finalist; Eighth Place

Scott Ulberg

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2004-2005

Samantha Breakstone

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair Semifinalist

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Dara Steinberg

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Wayne Reizner

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Zachary Swiss

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Eric Waller

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

2003-2004

Gayle Denman

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Carol Eisenstat

Intel International Science and Engineering Fair; Fourth Place

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Julie Friedman

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Samantha Goldman

Intel Science Talent Search Semifinalist

Danielle Teicher

Siemens Competition in Science, Mathematics, and Technology Semifinalist

2002-2003

Matthew Fox

Siemens Competition in Science, Mathematics, and Technology Semifinalist

2001-2002

Michael Wagner

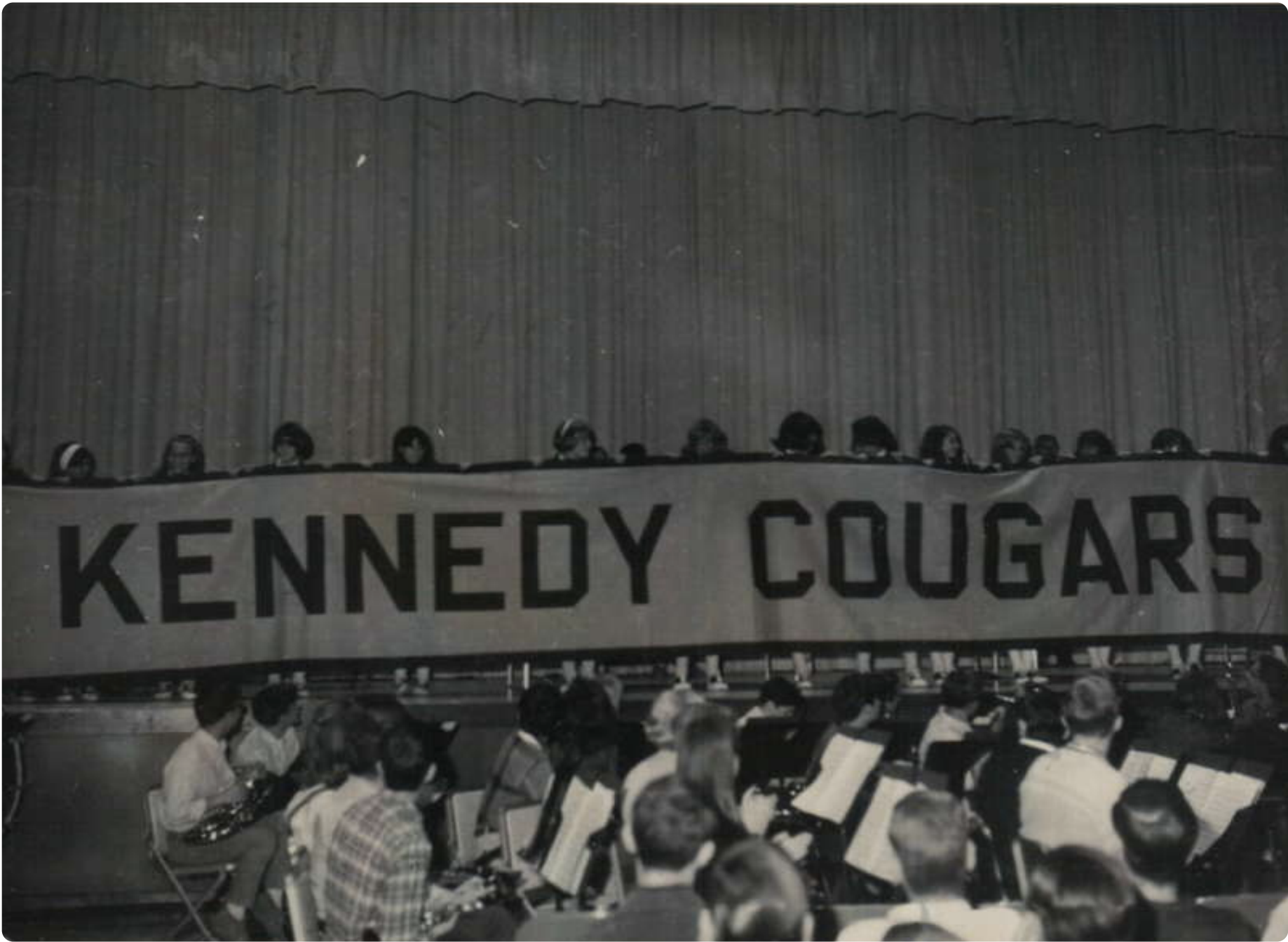
Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, Third Place

Intel Science Talent Search Finalist

21

Music Education at John F. Kennedy High School

Jade Beauharnais



Music Education at John F. Kennedy High School has evolved tremendously since its humble beginnings. It plays a big part in the lives of many students. There are many positive attributes of music education on

the brain that affect a student's academic performance. At Kennedy High School, the music department has expanded greatly since 1966, as the band, orchestra, and choir classes have improved with changing

times and new technological advances. While there are some similarities in the program from then and now, there are many significant differences that make music education at Kennedy High School what it is today.

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. The inclusion of music education from a preschool to college level and other higher education is common in many countries because involvement in music is considered a core part of human culture. Children in elementary schools begin to join school choirs and bands at around fourth grade. By high school, students can study their chosen art more in depth than at a lower education level. New York State graduation requirements include one year of study in arts. The Bellmore-Merrick Central High School is dedicated to offering all students a comprehensive arts education, which includes music.

It has been proven that children who play a musical instrument have significant differences in the way their brain works and it helps them academically and socially. Research has shown that music enhances a child's skill in other aspects of their life. Kenneth Guilmartin, cofounder of Music Together, a music development

program for infants, says, "Making music involves more than the voice or fingers playing an instrument; a child learning about music has to tap into multiple skill sets, often simultaneously. For instance, people use their ears and eyes, as well as large and small muscles." Research has also proven that the brain of a musician works differently from someone who does not play music. A study led by Ellen Winner, professor at Boston College, and Gottfried Schlaug, professor of neurology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School, found there was a change in the images of the brain after 15 months of being taught and practicing music. The children in the study had improved on being able to discriminate different sounds and there was an improvement in their motor skills. The images of the brain after this study showed changes that supported other research on the effects of music education on the brain (PBS).

Music education in Kennedy high school has changed in the last 18 years. In an Interview with choir teacher Ms. Jeanette Pincus, I asked about the music education program from when she started working at Kennedy High School in the 1990s and to the program now. Pincus explained that there have been significant changes in the

music education program at Kennedy High School. The students are devoted to their music learning. Though there are varying degrees of skill, each student is dedicated and focused on their music education. There has been an increase in participation in groups such as New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) and All-State. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of student-run music groups, especially in vocal music. There are more students in music classes at the school than there were in the past. Classes are now much more structured and organized. The interview with Ms. Pincus revealed how much music education has changed since 1998. It has changed due to a variety of things ranging from an increase in organization to more student participation and enthusiasm. Music education greatly affects the lives of students that participate no matter what instrument you play. It gives students the skills to communicate with one another without the constant persistence of technology that surrounds our lives. It serves as an outlet for personal expression as well as a useful learning tool. Students tend to participate in multiple types of music that include different types of instrumental music as well as vocal music. Rehearsal time is used more efficiently and students are focused during that time.

Music education in Kennedy has improved greatly in the last 18 years and that has been a huge benefit for the students that are eager to learn. According to Ms. Pincus, back in the 1990s, the music department was not as well developed as it is today. Not many students had a background in music before starting high school as opposed to now where many students do. Ms. Pincus also explained that, although music technology has advanced considerably, she believes music is “a live, personal art form” and technology takes away from that. However, she has used new technology to assist with communication between her and the students and in music recording. This lead to asking how receptive the students are to this minimal use of technology since it is a huge part of their lives. Ms. Pincus explained that the students are more receptive because it allows them to communicate and work together through nothing but the music. Technology being used in a music classroom is something that has become more common in recent years. In a recent survey, 74% of participating teachers noted that technology expands the curriculum and motivates students to learn. It offers easy access to connect with the musicians and leaves time for flexibility. It encourages students to create

and share their music in class. New advances in musical technology has made it easier for students to create, practice and learn music. New technology provides a way for students to express their creativity in a non traditional way in a classroom format.

At Kennedy High school, the music programs have expanded significantly over the past 20 years. From increased participation in groups such as New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) and All-State, to a rise in the number of student-run music organizations, there are more Kennedy students participating in the music program than ever before. Originally, there was no band class, only a jazz band club, and there was only one districtwide orchestra. Today, the band program expanded immensely, with concert band, symphonic band, and wind ensemble. In orchestra there, are four classes. Students also participate in a variety of after-school music clubs, including jazz band, pit orchestra, and several choirs.

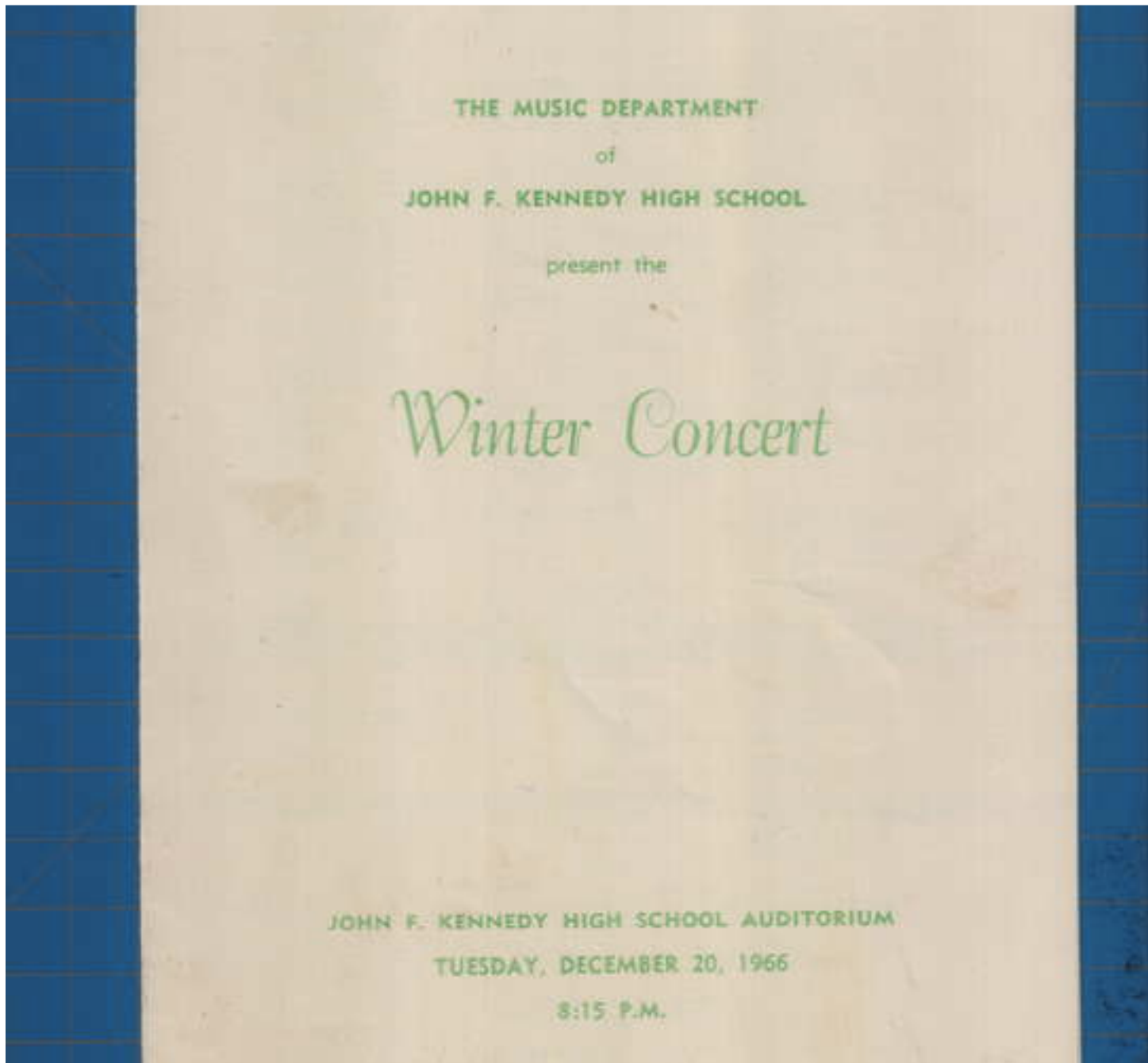
John F. Kennedy High School's music program has evolved over time. New technology, the teachers' passion for music, and student's eagerness to learn have all contributed its growth. The improvements made due to increased

dedication is what makes music education at Kennedy High School what it is today.

22

John F. Kennedy High School Presents: Music in the Making

Nicole Rezak



Music has served a variety of purposes ever since its origin, and its role continues to change from day to day. In the beginning of the 20th century, music was mainly popularized among the upper class,

as a demonstration of their elite status.

However, it was during this time period when music became more incorporated into school systems. This was a result of the progressive reformers' attempts to

increase the empowerment among the average citizens. They believed that everyone, not just the elite, had the right to take a part in music, thus promoting music in the curriculum. Reflecting the shifting values of the time period, progressive reformers played an important role in the introduction of music into school systems. By the 1960s and 1970s, music educators began to revolutionize music education, creating Comprehensive Musicianship. Its main goal was to incorporate “music history and theory” into the minds of children across America’s schools. Over the years, there have been periods of interest and disinterest regarding music education in school systems. Various organizations have coalesced to make positive contributions to the music departments, and through their efforts they have achieved a great deal of success. In response to these organizational efforts, music education at John F. Kennedy High School has evolved over time from its humble beginnings in the 1960s to become the well-developed program in which students learn and thrive today.

Prior to the 1800s, music was heavily used in Europe among the wealthy class, as a means of distinguishing the genteel class from the poor class. In the cities of the early 1900s, social settlements began to

pop up. These social settlements were “centers for neighborhood social services and social reform activities” and focused on incorporating music into average people’s lives. Starting in the 1920s, music became adopted into rural America and later became incorporated into the school systems of the time. This mirrored the attitudes of the progressive reformers, who advanced the mindsets of the American people. This made music more readily accessible to everyone, contrasting its original availability and purpose in Europe. Not only did the integration of music further separate us from our English counterpart, it also helped democratize music education, for everyone now had an equal chance to learn a musical instrument or simply sing along to a song. This changed the ways education was implemented among different schools in the United States; it created a “universal schooling system” and united the masses, coast to coast. It still took awhile for other music opportunities (such as learning how to play instruments, singing in a chorus, or learning music theory) to be considered topics of their own, so they were first introduced as extracurricular activities.

When music was finally introduced as a part of the curriculum, its advocates first focused on vocal groups, then incorporated instrumental education, and

finally introduced music appreciation and theory.

Located in Bellmore, Long Island, John F. Kennedy High School opened to students in the Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District in 1966. Kennedy High School was small at first, and many of its first programs were not nearly as developed as well as they are today.

Nationally, there has been an overall increase in practically every aspect of music education in high schools. The school year 1975-1976 reported the lowest levels of music participation, and since then, levels skyrocketed, reaching all time highs in the school year 2007-2008. There have been additions to the curriculum over time as well, including AP Music History in 1995-1996. During Kennedy's early years, there was a more established instrumental program than vocal program. The Winter and Spring Concerts both represented Kennedy's band and orchestra, led by conductor Vincent Heilker. Later on, the band went to represent Kennedy in its first "Pop Concert," portraying the students' abilities of playing a different genre of music. In 1968, just two years after the opening of Kennedy High, the Music Department enlarged by an addition to the sophomore chorus. It certainly was more work to handle for the conductor, yet it is

much better than the alternative of having an underdeveloped program.

In an interview with Mrs. Jeanette Pincus, one of the music teachers at Kennedy, she discussed the music department at her previous school she taught at, and then informed me on the way music was taught at Kennedy High School. She began her teaching career teaching at a private school in which she taught music history, from the Middle Ages time period to the end of the Baroque time period. Rather than be considered a music course, music history was actually considered a history class. This shows how the school did not place an importance on music education; the students did not learn how to play music whatsoever, but instead received a typical, mundane lecture about dead musicians and their contributions to Western culture. When Mrs. Pincus transitioned to Kennedy High School, she told me that what we have now is drastically different from what Kennedy was like in the 1990s. To begin, there was not a chairperson for each school in the district, rather there was one chairperson for all of the high schools and middle schools in the district. This made it very hard for there to be proper supervision for the correct development of the programs at each other schools. There was also a

huge lack of respect for Mrs. Pincus and music classes. She vividly remembers the wild behavior from her students. The students did not respect her at all, to the point where one student jumped out of a window to escape the class. The Kennedy music department was desperate for change, and sure enough, change was delivered.

The music department has made great strides ever since its inception, but with the creation of one new concept, music education's popularity and effectiveness skyrocketed. The Comprehensive Musicianship Project (CMP) was initiated nationally in 1965 and, according to Bennett Reimer, aimed to "invigorate [the] original curriculum, which was characterized...as being limiting, confining, dull, and ultimately self-defeating." Its creators anticipated many changes such as "stressing listening, composing, and improvising in addition to performing composed music; by going beyond Western classical literature to include both Western non-classical musics and non-Western musics; by relating music to the other arts," which were things that were not done at the time. CMP's nurturing nature provided students with creativity to explore and grow as young students. This was not something

embraced by students at the time, especially those in high schools, for they contained themselves in the realm of things that they know. One of the main problems with the development of music education programs is that each country (more specifically each state in the US) placed varying levels of importance on different subjects; the core subjects never change, but what varies are the extra and supplemental classes that are offered.

Reimer suggested three new roles for music education: 1. Musicianship roles, 2. Listenership Roles, and 3. Music Education Roles; these roles, he claimed were vital to achieve the change he desired. With the advent of these new additions, he hoped it would spark a perpetual, positive change in music education.

In addition to Comprehensive Musicianship, several movements brought to attention the need for change in music education. The Tanglewood Symposium, which took place in 1967, brought to attention the relationship between American music culture in the U.S. and whether or not it should influence music education in schools. While Western Civilization music has dominated music education in schools, there was an increase in diversity among American

society, causing people to neglect Western Civilization style. The Western Civilization music was not reflective of the extreme diversity and changes occurring in American society at the time. As a result of this argument, a new array of classes was created, reflecting the new music genres of the time such as jazz, electronic, rock, and folk. Music eventually branched out of the classroom and onto the fields, supporting the ever-popular sporting events, such as football games. As a result of this group and its efforts, there was an increased participation in bands in music departments.

Along with individual acts, federal government programs affected music education. These changes would not have been responsible without the Department of Education. Beginning in the 1960s, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I “enabled great numbers of children to participate in music and other arts.” This legislation allowed schools across the country to follow through with their word, by allowing schools to hire professional music teachers and buy instruments for the kids. Title III permitted the establishment of “supplementary educational centers and services, including arts programs.” The final piece of legislation, Title IX, granted funding for

research and expansion of existing developmental programs. Without the passage of the ESEA, its statement of how “the arts should be an essential and vital component for every student’s education” would not have been a reality for many students in the United States.

All of these past struggles and the previous triumphs allowed John F. Kennedy High School’s music program to become what it is today. Currently at JFK HS, there are four bands (Freshman Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band), four orchestras (Freshman Orchestra, Advanced Orchestra, String Ensemble, and Chamber Orchestra), and six different types of choruses (two freshman choruses, Concert Choir, Variety Choir, and two student run choruses).

Additionally, there is one combined ensemble between the certain band and orchestra members who perform in the spring musical. To ensure the students receive the correct musical background, each musical branch has its own director.

Mrs. Pincus is in charge of the choruses, Mr. Avellaneda is in charge of the bands, and Mr. Levin is in charge of the orchestras. These teachers not only lead the clubs, but also teach their students during periods in the day, showing that music is just as important as a core class

like math or science is. Just like there were in the inception of Kennedy's Music Department, there are still two main concerts a year, a winter and a spring concert. However, unlike in the past, the music experience does not just stop in the classroom. Now more than ever, many students are participating in NYSSMA and earning spots in All-County and All-State ensembles, where they get to be surrounded by the best musicians in their category. Recently, Kennedy alumna Beatrice Brown was inducted into All-National Band, making her the first student ever to receive such an honor. With the ample resources now present, the students at Kennedy High now have the perfect means of attaining musical greatness.

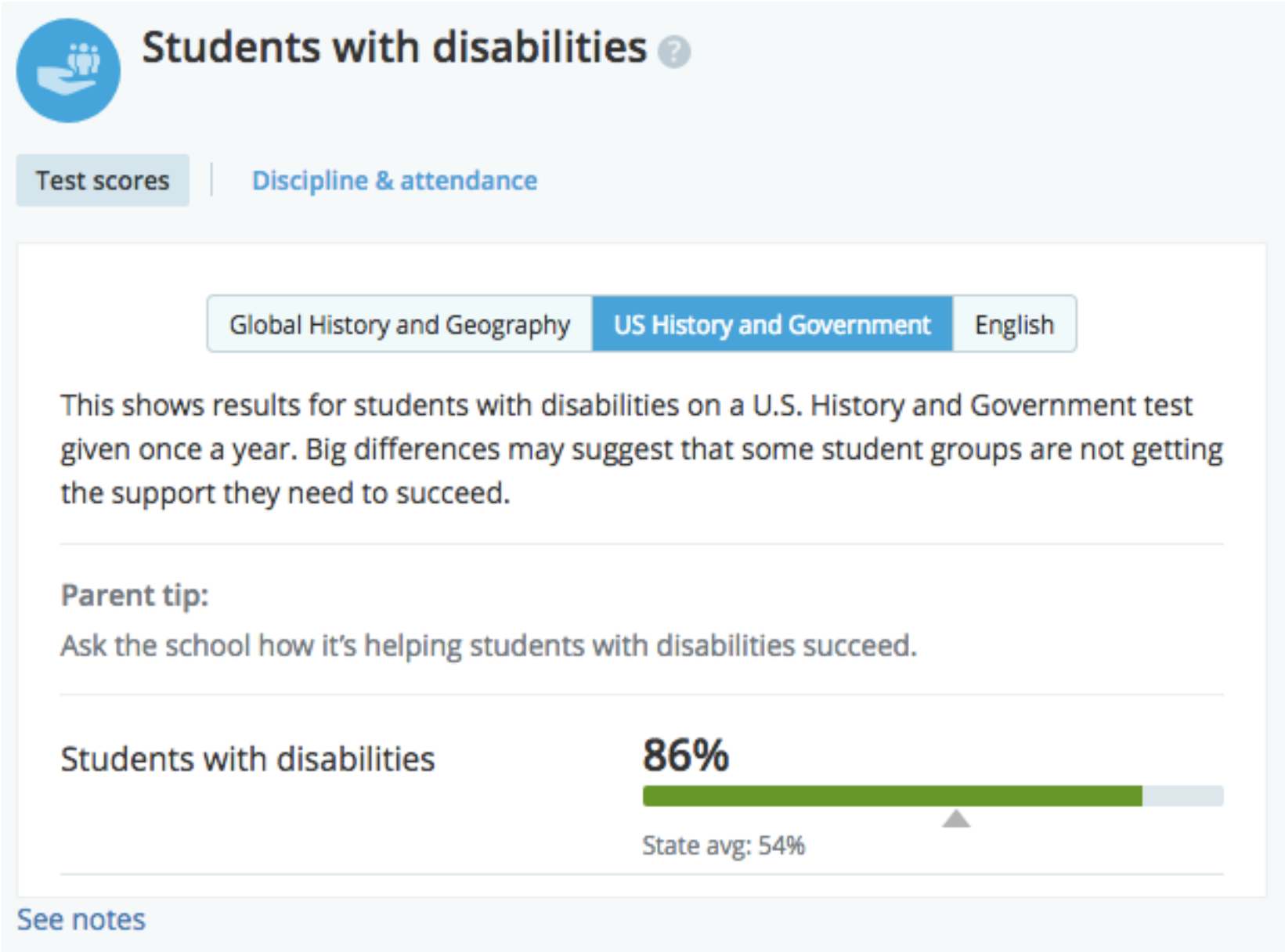
Music education has come a long way since its origin. What once was strictly a form of entertainment among the elite is now a nationally and globally appreciated part of society. Through the many efforts of passionate individuals and governmental legislation, music has finally become a permanent part of school curriculum. Everyone has his or her interest, and for the students who are passionate about music, they can now immerse themselves in the ideal

surroundings to practice something they love.

23

A Brief History of Special Education

Ron Lampert



Special Education has faced many challenges, but legislative accomplishments over the past 50 years have helped guarantee equal educational opportunities for students of all abilities.

Beginning in the 1970s, the federal government passed laws, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975, to ban discrimination

towards children with special needs. Each year, Special Education programs help millions of children succeed in school. Special Education has evolved since the 1970s to become what it is today, helping children with special needs graduate high school and lead fulfilling lives.

The story of Special Education in the United States starts in the early part of the 20th Century. Parents formed advocacy groups to help bring the educational needs of children with disabilities to the public. These groups gained momentum mid-century, as John F. Kennedy launched his administration, intellectual disability was a neglected issue, receiving minimal state or federal funding. Few scientists were researching its causes, and even fewer doctors and educators were trained to support people with intellectual disabilities and their families. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the President's Panel on Mental Retardation. The panel's recommendations included spending a year busily gathering information, interpreting data, giving federal aid to states, and debating solutions. They reconciled competing agendas and submitted their report ahead of deadline. Kennedy strongly emphasized the importance of Special Education and kids with Special needs. In 1965, Lyndon B.

Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which provided funding for primary education, and is seen by advocacy groups as expanding access to public education for children with disabilities. Despite these two important events, by the 1970s, only a relatively small number of children with disabilities were being educated in public schools. By 1975, two important laws to Special Education would change how it was regulated, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The EHA guaranteed the right for a public education to any student, even if the student has a learning disability. These two acts have been instrumental in ensuring a free public education to millions of children with disabilities each year since passage. Now, children with disabilities can get an education equal to those without a learning disability.

Special Education has evolved since the passage of legislation in the 1970s, and it will keep evolving for a long time. Parent training and information centers must serve parents of children of all ages (birth to 26) and all types of disabilities. The United States, has developed one of the best and most special curriculum and programs for teaching core ability to

children with disabilities. Today, there are greater movements towards block grants rather than categorical programs and toward greater inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms. Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met. We see a greater number of Special Education students with 504s in middle and high schools. They cannot deny any child of applying for a 504 or IEP, but they can review it and decide the child does not need it. If someone is has a 504 plan or an IEP, they cannot get out of their plan of their Special Education classes, unless their application is reviewed and declassified. Section 504 requires recipients to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), passed in 1990, revised the existing EHA to ensure that students with disabilities are provided with Free

Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs. There are two big points in the IDEA that are always protected: to protect the rights of children with disabilities and to give parents a voice in their child's education. The law also provides for Individualized Educational Plans (IEP), which are developed to ensure that children who identified as having disabilities receive specialized instruction and related services. IEPs help kids with special needs get through school and succeed in the future. Schools cannot deny any child of applying for a 504 or IEP, but they can review it and decide the child does not need it. The IEP is developed by a team that includes the child's parents and school staff. The IEP is an extremely important document in the educational lives of students with disabilities receiving special education under IDEA.

Special education is designed for mentally, socially, physically, and emotionally delayed. Delay is based on the child's overall development in cognitive and scholastic skills. Children faced with one or more disability are usually admitted into these programs, to accompany and help them with their needs. These services are of no cost to the family and are available to children until they reach 21 years old. The

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) defines Special Education as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability,” but what exactly is Special Education? Often met with an ambiguous definition, the umbrella term of Special Education broadly identifies the academic, physical, cognitive and social-emotional instruction offered to children who are faced with one or more disabilities.

At the federal level, the Office of Special Education provides assistance to parents, advocacy groups, and schools related to services and programs for students with disabilities. Staff work together across various units to provide the most up to date policy and guidance, technical assistance, professional development, and monitoring to attain equal opportunities and positive results for students with disabilities. At the state level, New York State Education Special Education organization has created their own policies to see kids with Special Education succeed. Special Education Policy develops special education law, regulations and policy and informational materials which provide parents, educators, and other individuals with the necessary information to be effectively

involved in the education of preschool and school-age students with disabilities, including students transitioning from school to post-school. NYSED-funded technical assistance networks and centers across New York State provide local assistance and professional development to improve instructional practices and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Thankfully, the United States grants civil rights to all groups of people and allows anyone to get an equal education. Some countries do not allow kids with Special Needs to attend school. In Brazil, The Ministry of Education is responsible for national policies of special education in Brazil. Special education includes groups of individuals with specific behaviors (problem behavior) and those with special skills. Before Brazil had Special Rights legislation, they were discriminating and excluding kids with Special needs and even gifted children. In China, Special Education is handled by licensed teachers, who make up the curriculum and are in control of the system. Recently, Shanghai is working with the local Education Commission to develop a special curriculum and teaching materials for children with special needs, and has even created a training program, for teachers who plan to teach Special Education. In

Saudi Arabia, The Ministry of Education, along with the Ministry of Higher Education heads the educational system in Saudi Arabia, and since women have little rights in Saudi Arabia, they are split from men in the Education system. Students with special needs are allowed to enroll in public, private, or international schools if their grades are consistent with their age matched peers. If this is not the case the student can attend only a private school. Many countries have different laws and legislation, for the civil rights and education of students with Special needs.

The 1960s and 1970s, Congress and federal courts, were very progressive in passing Special Education legislation. Many states backed Congress, and passed their own laws mandating, encouraging, and funding special education programs. Advocates for students with disabilities have continually sought separate funding for special education services. There is a small population of Special Education students (1.2%), but that does not mean it is not important. Schools must ensure that students who are protected have equal access to a free, appropriate education and extracurricular activities.

24

The Gilder-Lehrman Institute and the Teaching of Social Studies at John F. Kennedy High School

Chase LaMagna



Since its creation in 1994, The Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History has played a large role in American education. Its goal is to promote the study of American history in schools. The Institute

has promoted this goal with the collection of original documents and primary sources from American history, and has branched out nationwide to influence countless teachers and students, including those at

John F. Kennedy High School over the past decade.

The Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History was founded in 1994 by Richard Gilder and Lewis E. Lehrman, wealthy philanthropists who wanted to promote “the study and love of American history.” A major purpose of the organization was to create a program that was designed to teach American history to students all over the country. It offers a wide variety of programs for scholars, professors, and students to gain a further understanding of American history. Such examples include historical documents, photographs, pictures, and other primary sources. Over the past two decades, the Institute has assisted in the development of history-centered schools, enrichment programs, and research centers for students, educators, and the general public.

The teaching of history has evolved over the years. The Gilder-Lehrman Institute tries to bridge the divide between scholars and the broader educational community. According to historian Kenneth Jackson, having students and teachers from the secondary level engage in scholarly discussions with historians can help promote the teaching of history. Furthermore, the Institute helps provide

relevant and reliable resources to help teachers conduct student-centered lessons on American history, which can help schools promote social studies education and spark interest to students. Some of the Institute’s primary sources include a 1776 copy of the Declaration of Independence, a secretly printed draft of the United States Constitution, first hand photographs of slaves leaving the South heading North, letters from Civil War soldiers and their wives. With the improvements of archives it has led to a more successful environment for history teachers. Additionally, in 2001 the U.S. Department of Education sought to improve the teaching of American history courses through the Teaching American History Grant. With assistance from this grant, the Gilder-Lehrman Institute has helped over 1500 teachers attend staff-development workshops to improve the teaching of American history.

In 2006, John F. Kennedy High School became a Gilder-Lehrman Institute affiliate, and has offered several electives as part of this program. The Gilder-Lehrman American History Sequence is composed of three courses: American History Through the Arts, Great Decisions in American Foreign Policy, and Uncovering

the Past: In Search of History. In an interview with Ms. Erin Coman, who teaches American History Through the Arts, I asked about the significance of the class as well as the effects it has on her history courses. Ms. Coman explained how she was assigned by the social studies chair, Ms. Karen McGuinness, to teach in the Gilder Lehrman program. Coman wanted to design a class that used film and art as a way to teach American history. She believed having a class centered on film and arts would engage the students more and make the class more enjoyable. She used a variety of movies to represent specific decades, including *Gone with the Wind* to represent the Civil War era, *Singing in the Rain* to represent the 1920s, specifically the golden age of Hollywood and their technological achievements, and *It's a Wonderful Life* to represent the 1930s and the struggle for Americans during the Great Depression. In addition, she used art and music to teach about different eras of American history. Ms. Coman has had to modify the course over the years. Specifically, improvements in technology have allowed her to create more student-centered projects.

Another class offered as part of the Gilder-Lehrman sequence is *Great Decisions*, a

foreign policy course which is taught by Mrs. Scherer and offered to eleventh graders. What made this class unique is that it focused on the effects the United States had on other countries, as well as having students have a variety of resources to learn the material and participate in group projects. Finally, in twelfth grade, there is *Uncovering the Past*, which is taught by Dr. Urban. In this class students learn how to effectively research and use primary and secondary sources. Also, students learn how to properly cite their sources, create annotated bibliography, and analyze documents. This class is important because it teaches high school students how to successfully conduct research for college and beyond.

Another celebrated aspect being an Gilder-Lehrman Affiliate school are the research contests offered for students annually. For example, according to an annual report of the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of Kennedy High School has had winners in the Civil War Essay Contest, including Michael Golodner in 2010 and April Soohoo in 2008. In addition, many Kennedy students have won awards at the local and state levels of the National History Day Competition, and other have

gone on to receive internships at the New York Historical Society.

Over the past ten years, the Gilder-Lehrman Institute has played an important role in the teaching of social studies at John F. Kennedy High School. By having the availability of historical documents they are able to achieve their goal to develop success for both teachers and their students. This can be seen with John K. Kennedy High School for since their involvement in 2006, it has lead to success not only in the elective courses, but also for history classes in general. By having historical documents photographs, journal entries, and other resources, it has allowed for students to get more engaged in their studies and appreciate American history.

PART 4 - EXTRACURRICULARS

25

An Analysis of the Fifty Year History of the JFK High School Drama Club

Rebecca Stekol



Kennedy High School knows when it is drama season — from the posters of the current show taped on walls around the school to the sleep deprived actors running their lines whenever possible, no

one can escape from the drama department. To be a part of the Kennedy drama productions requires serious commitment, and that is why the club has been so successful in recent years. Behind

the smallest perfected nuance of every production is a talented and dedicated team of crew members, stage managers, actors, and the director. During the past four years of my participation in drama, I have been a part of the cast for three shows, the pit for two, and the crew for two; being able to see the drama club from all these perspectives showed how much a drama production is like a well-oiled machine. However, I realized that it took the drama club a long time to get to where it is now. Even though the program began the same year JFK High School opened, interest in the club peaked and fell, and it struggled to come into the spotlight throughout the first few decades. Nevertheless, as the school settled into its foundation, so did the drama club. Throughout John F. Kennedy High School's fifty years in session, the drama club has been perpetually growing into the wonderful program it is today, and with the club's development came a greater impact on the students participating and on the community as a whole.

Around the time that John F. Kennedy High School first opened its doors, there were many initiatives occurring at the federal level concerning the arts. In 1965, Congress passed the National Foundation of the Arts and Humanities Act. This

created an organization that would use federal funds to assist existing programs that promote the advancement of the arts and humanities. According to the founding legislation, "An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone," and as a result the federal government must sustain "a climate encouraging freedom of thought" and provide the "material conditions" necessary for the promotion of creative thinking and appreciation of the diversity of our heritage. With the passing of this act, the seed for the revitalization of the arts was planted, right before JFK High School first opened its doors. However, the overall development of the arts in high schools across the United States was slow to bloom. Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, an educational reform movement started in the late 1980's to ensure that the standards of American education were raised in order to catch up in intellectual advancements with our then-Cold War competitors. One branch of this reform movement sought to make the arts a core academic subject that all students were required to have a knowledge of. The National Standards for Arts Education, endorsed by many organizations centered around the arts, seeks to provide educators with goals for how to instruct their students in the arts and benchmarks

for achievement. According to these standards, formally adopted in 1992, the arts have many advantages, including giving students “the skills required to participate effectively in today’s society and economy” as well as allowing them to gain the full perspective of the human experience and creativity; however, many primary schools consider an education in the arts to be optional. The gradual emphasis of the resurgence of arts education through the latter half of the twentieth century paralleled the development of John F. Kennedy High School since its first year in regards to the strength of its arts departments. Although there is no clear way to measure the degree of importance our school places on the arts, the wonderful JFK drama club and its rich history is evidence that at John F. Kennedy High School, the existence of arts programs is not “optional.”

With the opening of JFK High School in the fall of 1966, the drama club subsequently began its 50 year journey to where it is today. In December of 1966, the drama club staged its first play: *The Madwoman of Chaillot*. The *Cougar Crier* chronicled this first performance, giving it a glowing review. According to the article, titled “‘Madwoman’ Triumphant As JFK First Drama Hit,” many people contributed

to making this musical a success. The “startling, stylized set” was designed and built by “Mr. Robert Reeves and his art students.” In addition, the play was directed by Miss Zenobia Alvarez and was choreographed by Mr. Leonard Goldberg, Mr. Patrick Variano, and Miss Judith Nicoll. The dedication and expertise of these adults “blended theatrically produce an exciting dramatic experience.” The article also credited an entire team of stage managers, light and sound crew, prop and set managers, and a costume and makeup designer that contributed behind the scenes. Of course, there was also a wonderful cast of actors, led by Vicki Garnick as the Madwoman, who brought “delightful intrigue and rollicking comedy” to the show. Evidently drama was extremely important in JFK High school’s opening year. The following spring, the drama club put on its first musical production, *Guys and Dolls*. Various articles in the *Cougar Crier* announced the show opening on the JFK High School stage, boasting that “all the leading players are gradually gaining acclaim as the characters they portray.” This first musical extravaganza (of many) of JFK drama starred Stan Ziegler, Barbara Korey, Andrea Wolf, and Cory Burns as the four leading players. The article also credited the heads of crew Rinnie Porcelli, Joe

Morales, Richard Russell, and John Bergin under the supervision of Mr. Robert Reeves for building the set. According to a program that was preserved from the production of *Guys and Dolls*, the show had a full pit orchestra composed of only students, a large crew that handled the stage management, building and painting, and lighting and sound, and a very large cast of leading players, ensemble members, and dancers. This demonstrates the obvious collaboration between the art, drama, and music programs which made *Guys and Dolls* a success.

In 1968, the drama club took a more serious turn when it put on Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. The *Forever Green* yearbook of that year has a group picture of all the students in the club, showing that there was a high level of participation that year as well. The year after that, the drama club put on a musical called *The Inspector General*, with the yearbook depicting a fewer, but still adequate, number of students participating; however, by the next decade, the cast started shrinking and the club began to perform, on average, just two small plays a year. In 1977, both plays that were performed (*Night Watch* and *The Odd Couple*) had only 9 and 8 cast members, respectively, as listed in the yearbook for that year. In

the pictures in the yearbook, the curtain was drawn as the actors were shown performing, indicating that there was no comprehensive set, and the costumes appeared to be lacking as well. In 1979, the drama club put on three small plays (*Death Knocks*, *Dracula*, and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*), directed by Georgia McGill, throughout the school year. The casts, similarly to those in the previous years, were small, and the sets appeared sparse, consisting of only couches, a bed, and makeshift doors.

The 1980s and 1990s was a slow developmental and transitional period for JFK drama. Some years proved to be better than others, but by the late 90's the drama club was on a course of steady improvement. In 1984, the drama page in *Forever Green* called that year's drama play, *Boy Meets Girl*, the "senior class play." Whether only seniors portrayed the leading parts or the senior class sponsored it, there seemed to be a feeling of exclusivity. The advisor was Mrs. Morse, who started her tenure with JFK drama in the late '70s, and despite the large number of students depicted in the group picture, the cast of 12 students continued the trend of small shows from the decade before. The next year, the drama club put on a play (*The Real Inspector Hound* Tom

Cobb) and a musical (The Boy Friend). The play had a small number of parts, but the musical appeared larger and more elaborate than most of the drama club's productions since its opening. The pictures in the yearbook show scenes from the performances of both shows, and the sets and costumes were better and more intricate than in recent years. In 1991, yearbook described one of that year's plays to have "suffered from the Kennedy curse of low attendance at drama productions." This reinforces the theme that education reformers during this time emphasized: the apathy of schools towards art programs and the negative impact that this lack of attention may cause on these programs. Still, the participation within the club seemed steady and the yearbook credited Arthur Mazor as president and producer and Mr. Robert Smolensky as the director, among others, that led the three performances the drama club did that year.

In my perusing of the Forever Green yearbooks, the worst year for JFK drama was 1994. The drama club put on Romeo and Juliet, and they needed to commission a recent graduate to play Romeo. The set consisted of a cardboard wall and a bed, which was just a large box and a pillow. Then, in 1998, the drama club seemed to

do a complete turnaround. The self proclaimed "Llew Generation," led by the new and enthusiastic Mr. Llewellyn, helped the drama club grow. The fall play of that year, Blood, was written by Mr. Llewellyn and directed by five seniors (Caity Condry, Jason Director, Eric Ledgin, Scott Kornberg and Brandon Osorio). The production featured a live band, movie projectors, and dance numbers to feature Shakespeare like never before. According to the whopping two pages that Forever Green dedicated to the drama club that year, the play "bled triumph and won critical acclaim." In the spring, the drama club performed the rock opera Tommy which was described as "one of the most exhilarating performances ever to grace the Kennedy stage." The same five seniors who directed Blood starred in Tommy, which shows that they were certainly superpowers in the drama club and cared deeply about the shows. Evidently by 1998, the drama club came a long way from the 1994 disaster. This short "Llew Generation" helped to set the stage for the success of the drama club in the future.

The period starting in the '03-'04 school year to the present is what I call the "Sheffield Era." Mr. Sheffield started working at Kennedy as an English teacher and the director of the drama club in the

fall of 2003, and since then, he contributed tremendous effort into making the drama club into what it is today. I was able to interview Mr. Sheffield before a rehearsal of our fall play, Harvey, about his experience as the director of JFK drama through the years. He described the condition of the drama club when he first arrived, saying that drama was a barely existing entity, with a very small budget, no sets, and very minimal costumes.

However, Mr. Sheffield noted that there was a strong interest in drama and a culture (for example, the legacies that graduating seniors pass down to the younger students) that had always been there. To ensure that this general interest could result in producing great shows, Mr. Sheffield and his students had to raise money, through ad sales, to buy decent sound equipment, adequate costumes, and materials to build sets. Mr. Sheffield also described a unique quality of Kennedy students in that those who are interested in drama are also involved in the music and art departments, cultivating a rich background in the arts. While it is not and will never be the main focus of our school, the arts, especially the drama club, have been embraced by the school and getting equal attention to other activities like sports, which is something that Mr. Sheffield praised Ms. Poppe for

perpetuating. Moreover, the open mindsets of the students in the club reflects on the community, because along with Mr. Sheffield, they selected and performed shows that gathered the interest of the community at large so that the performances became events in which many people could come together and enjoy a common pastime. The concern is always for the overall production, and there is minimal squabbling over individual parts, which is an attribute that Mr. Sheffield credited his love for JFK drama. In addition, I asked him about his future goals for the drama club soon, and his response (which focused on his desire for the club to do more service to others) showed me that even though drama has come a long way since the turn of the century, there are still always improvements to be made. Since Mr. Sheffield's arrival, the drama has put on a fall play and a spring musical every year. Among a few of the memorable shows that took place on the Kennedy stage were Grease, Anything Goes, Beauty and the Beast, Twelfth Night, The Drowsy Chaperone, Thoroughly Modern Millie and so many more. As I write this, the drama club is just beginning rehearsals of the 2017 spring musical, Pippin. Mr. Sheffield's dedication, as well as the hard work of the students and everyone else involved in the

productions, has made Kennedy drama a force to be reckoned with.

The arts have a special quality that is hard to define in words. When one immerses in any form of art, it opens up a world of culture and creativity and is also an escape from the mundanity of everyday life. I continuously praise the arts for allowing me to be everywhere and nowhere at once. At drama specifically, I am surrounded by a community of people who are as passionate about theatre as I am. I was able to interview Steven Alexander, the current president of the drama club, about just how remarkable the JFK drama community is and the impact it has had on him. He told me that the drama community is very unique because it “brings people of all different backgrounds and interests together” to create “something truly special.” Steven emphasized how much time and commitment it takes to be the leader of the drama club, but through all these hours he put in, he said that drama gave him “a backbone for confidence, dedication, and leadership” and has played a large role in his deciding to pursue music education. Finally, he told me that his favorite aspect of JFK drama is “watching each and every person develop a true love for the theatrical process” and

that he is extremely grateful for the experiences he had as a member of the club.

High school theatre has gained increasing popularity across the country since the creation of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities has been created. The benefits of having drama programs in high school is now widely recognized, with more and more communities around the United States contributing to local productions. There has been much research on the extent of the positive impacts that theatre programs have on students. In particular, Benjamin Wendell, in his dissertation titled “A Historical Analysis of a Suburban High School Musical Theater Program” conducted a comprehensive analysis of the musical theatre program of a specific school in upstate New York to show the importance of extracurricular music or performing arts activities in the field of teaching, in a time where these programs are suffering from budget cuts, as well as the benefits for students' development. Wendell used document analysis and qualitative interviews of the people involved in the school's musicals over the years in his research. The interviewees stressed how important the annual musical is to the high school because it brings together many

students of varying abilities on and off stage and it teaches many skills like work, cooperation, and life skills. In his discussion, Wendell stated how the documents and people he interviewed all emphasized the importance of a musical program for the sake of inclusivity and teamwork, and that the theater program was so successful because of the immense dedication of the students and adults who participated.

Overall, I have come to think of the JFK drama club as a well oiled machine with a human element. We have a dedicated cast, crew, pit, and leaders who all contribute in their own ways to make every production run smoothly and efficiently. The many hours put into making the shows successful allow the club to be more like a family, with the members learning something new about themselves and each other every day. The performing arts is, in itself, living, growing, changing, and constantly being shaped by the people who contribute their unique forms of creativity. It is important to continue the spirit of theatre within high school to encourage self expression while fostering a sense of community. I hope that after the current seniors graduate, the JFK drama program continues its tradition of excellence and accomplishment.

Gender Differences in Extracurricular Activities

Kevin Diebold



From football to soccer, service clubs to the school newspaper, extracurricular activities are a staple in the high school experience. Today, as gender disparities between men and women become less

prominent, the freedom to choose which activities one wants to participate in is increasing. When John F. Kennedy High School was established in 1966, a variety of extracurricular activities were available,

but the activities that were open to males and females, along with which clubs males and females chose to join, differed from that of today. As time went on, gender differences in extracurricular activities slowly decreased, and clubs became coeducational.

To understand gender differences in extracurricular activities when Kennedy High School welcomed its first class in 1966, one must understand the historical context. In the early twentieth century, extracurricular activities were often dominated by male students. Activities ranging from student government, debate teams, even cheerleading were predominantly male. As time went on, girls gradually became more involved, particularly in activities that were more publication-oriented like the yearbook, since writing careers were more open for women. However, many activities would continue to be either sex-segregated or, in the case of mixed gender, male-led. In addition, as girls started to participate in or even lead an activity, male interest in that activity would decrease. For example, cheerleading was predominantly male in the 1920s, but by 1950 it was, and still is, a predominantly female sport. By the 1950s, a division, as noted by James Coleman in his study of high schools,

between male and female students existed with athletics being for boys and club activities being for girls. This did not mean that female sports did not exist in high schools, as the first girls basketball league was created by the Marlborough, Throop, and Pasadena High Schools in 1890, and the 1960 Olympics spurred the growth of girl's interscholastic activities to compete with the Soviets.

When Kennedy High School welcomed its first students, gender differences in extracurricular activities were rather prevalent. According to early yearbook photographs, not all activities and clubs had gender differences, for the Student Council contained an equal number of boys and girls. However, a prime example of gender differences can be seen by the existence of gender segregation in the service clubs. In 1967, Kennedy High School had four community service clubs that students could join: Key Club, Interact Club, Leo Club, and the A.Y.S. Club. Of the four clubs, three (Key Club, Interact Club, and Leo Club) were all-male, while the A.Y.S., At Your Service club, was all-female. Whether this was de-jure or de-facto gender segregation cannot be determined through the pictures, but they do verify that gender differences were existent in Kennedy High school in its early

years. Though not offered in Kennedy High School today, the “Future Teachers of America” club and “Future Nurses of America” club were two national clubs that were meant to educate its members about their respective fields. These clubs consisted of only female members. In an interview with Ms. Poppe, the principal of J.F.K. H.S., she explained that this was representative of the opportunities of the time: “Now that I think about it,” she said, “I became a teacher, my sister became a nurse, and my brother became a police officer.”

Gender differences were also prevalent in athletics as well. In the yearbook, male sports, such as football, swimming, and soccer, are prominently featured, with each having their own page or two, and in some cases even had their scores listed. *The New York Times* and *Newsday* even had a section where they listed the scores of the recent high school football games, J.F.K. included. Female sports were not as well-publicized. Sports such as cheerleading were given recognition equal to that of the football and wrestling team, but girls’ basketball and volleyball were all grouped under the name “Honor Teams” which only took up one yearbook page. This trend would continue on into the early seventies. It should also be noted that all the boys’

sports, except lacrosse, were varsity, while for girls, the only varsity-level sports were cheerleading, kick line, and the Leader Corps. Principal Poppe said, even when there a sport had teams for both boys and girls, they were major differences. For example, when she played basketball in high school, she told me that boys played “full-court” basketball, while girls could only play “half-court” basketball, which was a slight surprise to her since she played full-court basketball with her brother before she attended high school.

In 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments Act, which banned discrimination on the basis of gender in education programs or activities. This did not take effect overnight, but its effects can be seen over time, as indicated by the yearbooks after 1980. Although some activities, such as the Math team, were still all male, there was a much greater degree of gender integration. For example, by 1980, all the Service clubs counted both boys and girls among their members, and by 2000, there was complete gender parity in these clubs. The Math Team also now contains both boys and girls, whereas the 1967 and 1980 Math Team only contained male students. In sports, changes can also start to be seen with a girls’ tennis team earning its

own section and the girls' basketball team having its picture and list of names in the yearbook. Since 2000, girls' sports have received just as much attention as the boys' sports in the yearbooks, all receiving their own page. The girls' sports now include a varsity soccer team, a cross country team, a varsity lacrosse team, a varsity softball team, and a varsity badminton team, the girls' basketball team has become varsity, as have the tennis and volleyball teams.

Today, almost all include both male and female members. In sports, the boys have their own badminton team, while the girls now show their own swimming and golf teams, and the wrestling team includes female athletes. However, gender differences in extracurricular activities still exist--for example, there is no girls' football team or boys' softball team, and few sports are coeducational--but the changes at Kennedy High School over the past 50 years have reflected the progress toward gender equality in the United States.

Soccer at Kennedy High School: The Daoust Legacy

Jake Lamonsoff



John F. Kennedy High School opened in Bellmore, Long Island, in 1967. Among the all the new desks and chairs were new ambitions of the students who occupied them. Some of these ambitions have

continued in the high school to the present day. One of these ambitions has transformed into a tradition, the ambition of the Varsity Soccer team to work together to be the best and play with

honor. The history of the Kennedy Boys Soccer team extends all the way from the October of 1967 to the present day. For most of the team's history, three decades, one coach, Richard Daoust, shaped and developed the soccer program, and still has an impact on the team today.

In the time before Coach Daoust, the soccer team was led by Edward Abrams, the first coach of Kennedy High School Boys Varsity Soccer. Although Edward “Ed” Abrams was not a teacher at the school, he coached the team until 1974, his career with Kennedy Varsity Boys Soccer (KVBS) spanning a successful seven years. His first impression of the team was not overwhelmingly positive. Although Abrams had a positive outlook on the future, he was very mindful of the presently inexperienced athletes at his disposal. Not only had soccer only become popular in the U.S. just a few years prior, but he was coaching at a brand new school with untested and unset precedents. Although it may have been unknown to him at the time, his values and standards would affect the generations of Soccer players for the next half a century.

Luckily, no better coach could have been hired for the position. Ed Abrams was a graduate of SUNY Buffalo. During his time

studying at the university from 1947 to 1951 he had been a member of the soccer team for all four soccer seasons.

Prestigiously, he had been the captain of the team for two of his four seasons. To his classmates and his teammates, Abrams was known and praised for both his sportsmanship and his leadership. This leadership was far more than necessary when he received what would become the first Kennedy Varsity Soccer Team. In 1967, Steven Nowicki reported in the Long Island Herald, “Abrams does not have many experienced boys, but is hopeful that he can build a good team in the future.” The first team to be coached by Abrams definitely had a rough start their first season. Losing 4-1 against Baldwin, the future seemed bleak for the rookies. Abrams, who was very experienced against all types of players was able to recognize his team's weaknesses, as well as his team's strengths. For the first season, he chose to focus less upon individual skill, and more upon heart and effort, a tradition which was compounded upon by Richard Daoust (Abrams’ successor as coach) and still stands today. The team appeared to grow close quickly, and bonded over their first win.

Kennedy’s first win happened at an away game in Hewlett. The team was able to

defeat Hewlett three goals to two. Bill Seader and Steve Kahn were the first to score for Kennedy, both of their goals were assisted by Gary Glasser. The final and winning goal was scored by Stan Aikman in the third period of the match. The team left a big impression on Hewlett's field, but an even bigger impression on the roadway home. Bob Rubin of the LI Herald wrote about their ride home in an article labeled "Noisy Bus Ride Home for Kennedy Booters." In his article, Rubin described, "Motorists driving in the Bellmore area yesterday may have been distracted by a bus full of screaming, seemingly insane, soccer players heading toward the new Kennedy High School. They probably didn't realize it, but they were witnessing a little bit of history." In the same interview with Rubin, Abrams stated that the ride home was definitely noisy, and that he intended to put the ball of the match (likely Hewlett's ball due to it being an away game) into the trophy case, although the ball does not appear to still be there. The season ended, as was expected of the rather green team, with a losing record, capped off with a big loss against Massapequa, which later went on to win the county title.

Although the first season was no fairytale, the second season of 1968 was shockingly

better. Fulfilling his promise, Coach Abrams developed a sufficiently experienced team within the first year. Hanging on the gym soccer banner today, the team of 1968 can be remembered for winning the conference for that season. Abrams continued to develop the team for the next five seasons until gaining the help of a coaching assistant, Richard Daoust.

Beginning in the season of 1974, Richard Daoust started his career with the Kennedy Cougars as a coach's assistant. Daoust was a young teacher, who was beloved from his students from the very beginning. Teaching in the history department, he was known for silly quotes and dry humor. On the field, however, this was not the case. Taking example from Coach Abrams, Mr. Daoust took the program very seriously. Only coaching together for a single season Daoust would have a lot to learn. Over the next few seasons, the team continued to play without too much success nor failure. Status quo seemingly plagued the team for ten years until Daoust successfully secured his first Conference Championship (A record of the team's top highlights can be found on a banner in the gym). An interview with Coach Craig Papach, a friend and coworker of the late Coach Daoust, reveals later years of

Daoust career with KVBS. Both coaches worked together for nearly a decade before Daoust's untimely death. Papach described Coach Daoust as "a hardass" in his later years. Papach claimed that Daoust would not hesitate to have kids run laps if they were out of line, he expected the best out of every kid who showed up on the field. "He did not care who the kid was in school," Coach Papach describes, "He could be a deadbeat, the worst in school, but if he showed up to the field and worked hard... Daoust would love em.'" The divide being established by Daoust between the field and school was of utmost importance to the program. It did not matter if the kid was a jock, a nerd, a drama king. There was only one name for the group of them, KVBS. What coach Daoust started as a team, he turned into a family.

Coach Daoust had the right attitude necessary to be a coach, although the team's record did not necessarily reflect the success he had experienced while building the team. His first few years likely were a rough start, he had a lot to learn for strategy. But learn he did. Coach Papach discussed the process Daoust took to learn new strategy for the team to use, strategy that like many other aspects of his coaching, lasted long after his term as

coach had ended. Specifically, Coach Papach described Daoust as very willing to learn, even going as far as taking a trip to Europe to learn new coaching techniques. In Europe, Daoust learned to teach soccer differently than most other coaches which arguably gave him a bit of an edge in the league. European soccer tactics often are considered more contemporary to the current day than American tactics. The reason for this is because soccer is far less popular in America, whereas Europe is constantly improving their game. As a result, it takes time for tactics to travel across the continents throughout the U.S. which subsequently renders them outdated by the time they become commonplace in the U.S. One example known best to soccer players is the "diamondback" formation versus the "flatback" formation. The diamondback formation became obsolete by the mid 80's in Europe, yet continued to be used throughout U.S. teams into the early 2000s. Therefore Richard Daoust traveling to Europe to learn tactics rather than waiting for them to integrate into the U.S. granted him an outstanding advantage. It truly showed his dedication to the program, soccer, and his players.

What he took back from Europe became known as "the grids." The "grids" was a

new coaching technique that encouraged individual development by placing every player on the different corner of a grid (formations may vary) and having them perform uniform tasks. The advantage was organized chaos of sorts, Daoust could now see all of his players and compare their progress, no longer would he have to train everyone as a team, but now he could train individual players and ensure everyone was at or near the same level of skill. Coach Papach described the grids as having failed their first year once implemented. But as Daoust had continued to integrate it into our program, the next few years experienced unexpected success. By the time the grids had become an integral part of the program, Daoust was preparing to retire.

The last soccer game Daoust coached was in the late season of 2001. Within a few months following, Richard Daoust would pass away. The legacy he left behind was one of devotion to the team, and respect for the game. Fueled by grief, and bound by a common devotion to Coach Daoust, the team of 2002 would go on to win the Championship. The passing of Coach Daoust lost the team their leader, but had brought the program closer together than ever before. A bond was created between every player, created by

the example that Coach Daoust set before them, and solidified by his passing. This bond turned teammates into a family. The team then was lead by Coach Hamilton, the junior varsity coach during Daoust's term. Hamilton used the loss of Daoust to encourage the team to do their best. Hamilton created the Richard Daoust Memorial Game, a game played every year since the passing of Coach Daoust. Hamilton later moved and began coaching at another high school. Although he left Kennedy, he continued to return every year for a single day along with his new team, to play an honest game of good hearted soccer in memory of Daoust.

Following Coach Hamilton, Coach Grossi became the leader of the program. He too would continue the legacy that Daoust left behind, and would allow the team to guide themselves to victories using their commitment to the program, and pride of the game. Grossi's term ended on a very successful season in 2004. Coach Elias took over the program after him, and continued for years, to value the legacy of Daoust just as Hamilton and Grossi did before him.

Today, the Kennedy Soccer program is built on the strong traditions set by Richard Daoust. If you find yourself

enough time to visit the tryouts in late summer, you might see the team running to the grids for training. If you are a teacher at Kennedy you might find one of your students to be a clown in the classroom, but if you go to the field for practice, you will find the same student working hard and taking things seriously. If you can make it to the field for a game, watch as the team leaves the locker room and walks silently over to the “Richard Daoust” memorial sign, touching it out of respect before heading onto the field. A silent thank you for creating the program that all of us were proud to be a part of. And finally, if you stay long enough to see us on the field, you’ll see us put our hands together and in unison chant “Family.”

Boys’ Varsity Soccer Coaches

Abrams 1967-1974

Daoust 1974-2001

Hamilton 2002-2003

Grossi 2003-2004

Elias 2004-2014

Bisk 2014-present

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The History of JFK Varsity Football

Brendan Hondema



Football is one of the most played high school sports. According to CNN, there are over one million football players in high schools throughout America, and most high schools have a football program.

John F. Kennedy High School is no exception. Since Kennedy High School opened its doors in 1966, it has had a football team. The Kennedy football team traditionally had a reputation as an easy

win for opponents. Throughout its history, Kennedy's football team has fought to change that reputation, and at times it has fostered its talents to field a team with a winning record.

Football was originally created from rugby in the 1860s and 1870s. In the following years football gained enormous popularity. In 1876, the first ever legitimate college football league was created when several Ivy League schools, including Columbia, Yale, Harvard and Princeton, agreed on a standardized set of rules for the game. It was around this time that high school football began. Originally, high schools teams would play alongside college teams. Eventually high school football increased in popularity enough that they would stop playing colleges. From college football, high schools adopted the traditions of pep rallies, marching bands, mascots and homecomings. The new traditions brought along with football have helped create the atmosphere and popularity of high school football.

John F. Kennedy high school opened in 1966, and its football team was also created that year. One big disadvantage that Kennedy had to face in its first few years was playing against experienced teams with bigger rosters. During its first

year, the football team had only 19 players. During Kennedy's first scrimmage, the Kennedy coach was asked by the Massapequa High School coach, "Where's your team?" After this first scrimmage the team earned its reputation of being small and an easy win. According to Gary Binford, "A Small Squad is to Bellmore what winning is to what championship is to Farmingdale." ford). This stereotype did not come without reason. In Kennedy's first season of football, the team did not post a single win. The 1967 Kennedy yearbook recorded, "The first football season taught the team a lesson in both fortitude and persistence." By the end of the 1968 season, Kennedy still had zero wins. According to the 1968 Kennedy yearbook, students and coaches believed the team had "the building blocks for a successful football team."

Kennedy High School had some of its best football seasons in the early 1970s, when Kennedy started to break its losing streak. As a result, the football team gained popularity within the school, enough so that by 1971, "second only to frisbee throwing," according to the yearbook. In 1972 the team made impressive accomplishment of making it to second place standing in Division II." They had a record of 5-3, which was an improved

record for Kennedy football compared to the last several years. In 1973, the football team did something no one expected: they went undefeated. With their undefeated record and growing popularity, Kennedy football started to make strides towards changing the stereotype of being a team that was an “easy win.” That year, the yearbook wrote, “For the first time in Kennedy football’s eight history, Kennedy received an unusual thanksgiving treat” the Division One Title.” The celebration was short-lived, however. After a very successful few years, the team started to lose its winning streak, and had a succession of losing seasons in the late 1970s.

Kennedy football in the 1970s owed its success not only to the team's resolve and dedication, but to several players who rose up and helped make Kennedy successful. In 1972, four players stood out from the rest. One of these players was Wayne Gersoff, who was originally a soccer player that switched to a football kicker. He was extremely effective kicker throughout the season he scored six out of seven extra points. There were also several other players that helped the team, who also earned personal awards: Fred Montello, Neil Horschberg, and Steve Vernet. All three of them made the All-Division Team.

Additionally, Steve Vernet made the All-County Team. In Kennedy football a big part of whether that team will be good is what type of players they and their level of determination and care of not only the sport but for the team.

For the next several years, Kennedy football fell into a losing streak. The team began to fall back into its stereotype it had once fought so hard to shed. By the 1980s there was a brief break in the losing streak, and in 1987, the team had its second successful season in a row. The following year, the team had to deal with the Blizzard of 1988, which affected their entire season. One of the players, Eddie Cussatti, the school's star halfback, said, “I feel as if I’m playing the Green Bay Packers in the early ‘60s fighting off severe snow, and wind conditions.” Despite these unique challenges, Eddie Cussatti and his offensive line was able to run for 900 yards that season.

In the 1990s, the team faced some of its most challenging years. From 1994 to 1997, the team did not win a single Homecoming game. However, in 1998, the football team earned 4-4 record and won their first Homecoming game for the first time in four years. In addition, several players made the All-County and All-

Conference teams, and senior Brian Ascher was honored as a National Football Foundation Scholar Athlete. In 1999, school's increased enrollment moved the Cougars into a more competitive division. As a result, the football team finished the season with a disappointing record of 2-6. The 1990s may not have been victorious as the 1970s, but the team learned of its new potential to turn the program around.

Recently, all schools in the Bellmore Merrick Central High School District built artificial turf fields for their athletics programs, part of a community bond to improve the conditions of all the schools. The building of the turf field was not without controversy. According to a Long Island Herald, many residents did not like the idea that teachers were being cut and the schools are investing in artificial turf fields. "The Bellmore-Merrick Central High School District slashed 12 teaching positions this school year, even as Central District teachers agreed to freeze their salaries for a year." Another argument people had against the artificial turf fields was that it wouldn't help a student's education. According to one resident, "In troubled economic times such as these, any proposal that does not further a child's education must be rejected. Artificial turf would do nothing to contribute to the

educational well-being of any child in the Bellmore-Merrick community." The turf fields came as part of a \$49.89 million-dollar bond.

Over the past two years, the Kennedy football team has fought hard to change their reputation. In the 2016 season, the team fought to get an improved record of 4-4. The team was not able to make it to playoffs, but it built the foundation for a new and improved football program.

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Kickin' it with Kennedy's Kickline Squad

Kristin Scheel



Over the years, John F. Kennedy High School sports and clubs have helped keep students active members of their school community. The Varsity Kickline team has allowed students the opportunity to do

something with their spare after-school hours, and pursue or find their passion for dance and kickline that they might never have known existed. Since the opening of John F. Kennedy High School in 1966,

students have been encouraged to participate in their interests and share them with their school community, and Kennedy's Varsity Kickline team has grown with the school over the past fifty years.

Since the 1800s, people have participated in numerous variations of kickline. Kickline has not always been a high school level sport. Instead, it had been a recreational activity for young girls, or a basic performance team. In addition, it kickline has gone by many different names, such as dance squad, dance troupe, jazz team, or a drill team. One particular "dance troupe" was the Tiller Girls, which received their name from John Tiller, the creator of the Tiller Dance Academy in England, where these girls attended their dance classes. The Tiller Girls performed by linking arms and doing a consecutive high kick routine. They found that by doing this, it enabled them to precisely dance as one. Within this troupe, each girl approximately matched in height and weight. These girls performed as resident dancers, at places like the Folies Bergere in Paris, the London Palladium, the Palace Theater in Manchester and the Blackpool Winter Gardens. These girls did not just kick in a long line and look "pretty"; they would also perform a tap or jazz routine, which back then was called "Fancy-Dancing," but

today is called "Precision Dancing." This form of dance became very well-known and started to spread around the world. This later set the scene for the New York City Rockettes that perform on Broadway. The Tiller girls were the beginning of what today is called Kickline.

On the national level, Kickline is a popular activity for girls ranging from ages ten to 30, and there are nearly 200,000 kickline teams around the world today. National kickline teams recently started increasing their recognition in the 1990s. Before this, they would primarily perform at school sporting events, like football, basketball or baseball games, but now they compete professionally. At the Dance World Cup, for example, nearly 18,000 dancers compete from about 38 different countries, such as Germany, Japan and Australia, and around 40,000 people attend this event. There are also other minor events that dance teams participate in on the national level, such as the Starpower International Competition which includes similar characteristics but on a smaller level. Over the past twenty years, kickline has become more visible on the national level.

Kickline at John F. Kennedy High School is not much different from the Tiller Girls. Kickline has taken similar characteristics

and ideas that have helped to make it the sport it is today. At John F. Kennedy, kickline is a varsity girls' sport, and has been since the opening of the high school in 1966. Although it is a varsity sport, which usually includes just 11th and 12th grade athletes, varsity kickline includes grades 9-12. In fact, at Kennedy Kickline is the only varsity sport to include all four grades, 9-12. Generally there are about sixteen to twenty-two members on the team each year. There are new tryouts each year where the team is replenished with new and improved dancers and team members. These annual tryouts allows for a change-up of the team, also allowing for new talents to be displayed, as the graduating seniors, which is approximately one-quarter of the team, or those who no longer wish to participate on the team the following year, to be replenished. To be on team, there are no professional requirements needed. An aspiring member simply just needs rhythm, high kicks, both their right and left split, a leap, a straddle, and a double and single turn. A member must also have time to be able practice, as practices are often three to four times a week, for about two to three hours each day. A kickline/dance team will usually wear a matching uniform or costume, with a matching hairdo with ribbons, dance shoes/ballet shoes and poms, depending

on if the routine calls for them or not. Some routines require poms for certain dance moves, while other do not. There are many factors that depend on the style and occasion of the performed routine.

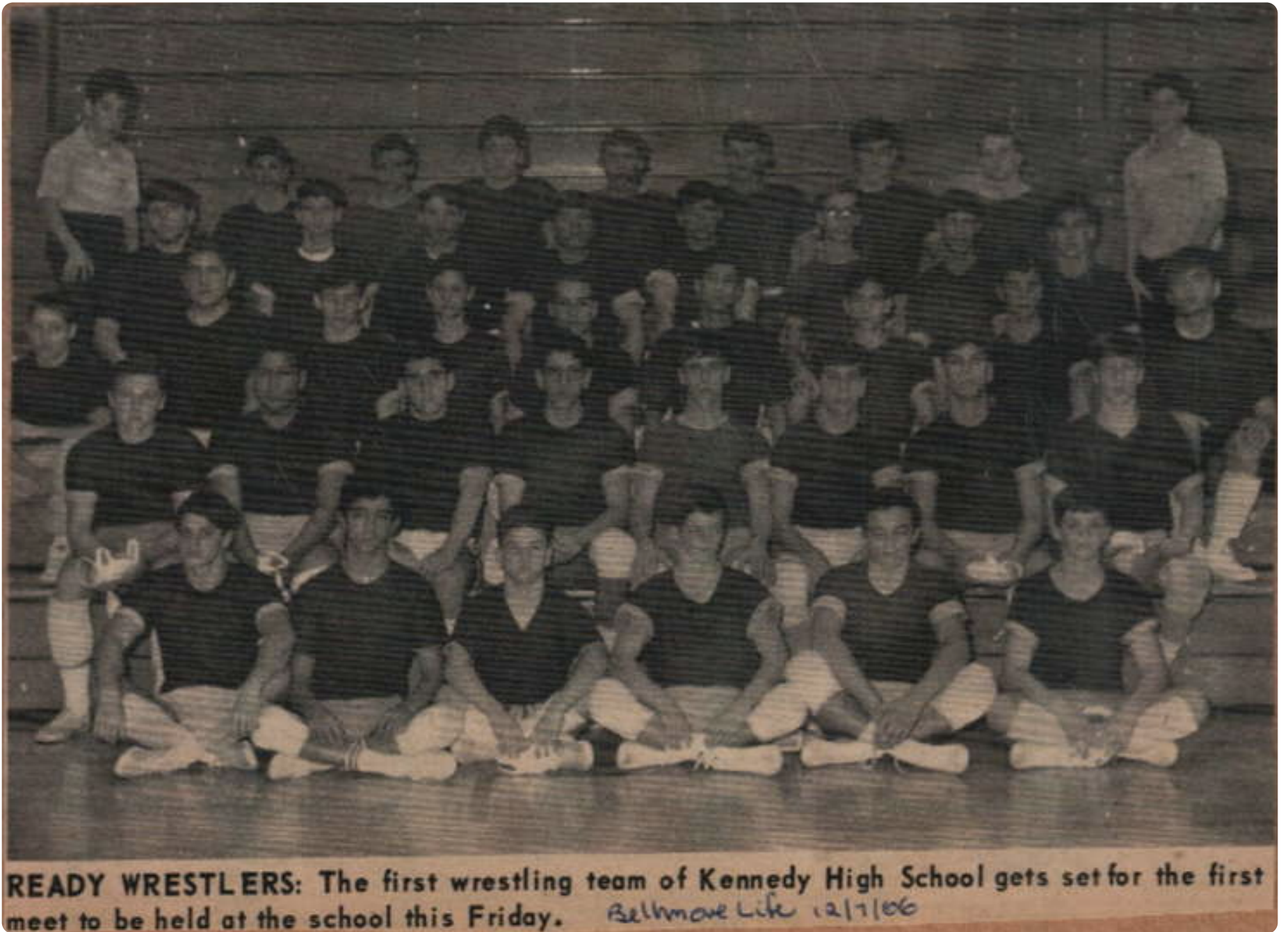
The current Kennedy kickline coach, Ms. Lois Schiavetta has been coaching Kennedy Varsity Kickline for the past three years. It was not until about three years ago that kickline was officially deemed to be a "sport" by New York State. Originally, it was just considered a school extracurricular activity, but it contained the same features that an official high school sport has, so Kennedy felt the coaching staff needed adjustments. Therefore, that was when Ms. Schiavetta was asked to coach the team. She had danced as a child until she was about forty years old. She minored in dance education while attending Buffalo State University for college, but other than that has had no further professional dance education experience. She simply has a love for dance that she wanted to carry on while being a special education teacher at John. F. Kennedy High School. Her love and experience for dance was present to others; she was asked to coach by the assistant principle of JFK Kickline after the former Kickline coach, Mrs. Faulkner, had stepped down.

On both the national level and local level, whether for a national competition or high school basketball game, kickline has lent itself the qualities to be recognized as an active sport in the United States and even globally. Just because one participates on the local level does not mean they are required to participate on the national level, so one can participate as much or as little as they wish. Kickline/dance is not a strict ruled sport; it is one of many forms of different and varied expression. The freedom of expression that this sport allows gives it the high admiration it attains in the dance world. At times, when conducting this research paper it was hard to differentiate the differences and similarities there are between the official sport of dance and the sport of kickline.

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How Wrestling has Evolved at Kennedy High School since 1966

Gurkamal Dadra



From the Ancient Egyptians to the scrawny freshman of Kennedy High School, wrestling has been practiced as a form of martial arts for millennia. Although its original purpose may have changed from

the time of the ancients to now, it remains a proving ground for young men around the globe. Since its inception in 1966, the John F. Kennedy Wrestling program has developed into the school's most

decorated sports program, boasting more awards and championships than any other team.

Depictions of wrestling have been traced to the ancient Sumerians, and were even mentioned in the world's oldest story, Epic of Gilgamesh. Scenes of what appear to be wrestling moves are depicted on ancient Egyptian walls from at least 4000 years ago. Modern Olympic wrestling can directly trace its origins from the Greek form of wrestling, albeit now with more clothes. Modern scholastic wrestling is said to originate from "catch-can" style wrestling, a form of wrestling that was popular with early Americans and would eventually turn into folk-style wrestling. The current style practiced in American schools, known as scholastic or folk style, became official in 1928 with the first official NCAA collegiate tournament.

Kennedy wrestling started in the first year of the school's opening in 1966. For the first two years, the Cougars were coached by Don Jackson, now a school Hall of Fame member. Under Jackson, the team had an amazing start for a new school, even garnering a south shore champion. The next coach, Schaeffer, served for the next 26 years. He trained three New York State champions and won 4 Nassau

County team championships. Coach Sheaffer introduced the "Granby roll" and "the Peterson" to New York State Wrestling, after traveling to a camp in Virginia to learn these moves. With these new moves, Kennedy wrestling was "the most technically adept team on Long Island," according to Newsday, beating stronger teams with sheer athleticism and technique. Under Coach Shaeffer, there were dozens of individual county champions and numerous tournament champions, including a two-time NCAA champion, Colonel Steve Hunte. After Coach Shaeffer's retirement, Coach Degaetano took charge of the program, created the alumni fund, and helped produce 5 State tournament wrestlers.

According to Bellmore Life, from 1969 to 1973, Kennedy Wrestling was the best program on all of Long Island, with three state champions and three team county champions. In particular, the 1973 team would be the most accomplished team to ever grace the wrestling room. From that team came two business owners of large corporations, a surgeon, and a decorated Army colonel, with most of them going on to wrestle at NCAA Division One Schools.

The Wrestling team continued to win multiple conference championships over

the next decade, along with multiple individual tournament champions as well as several county champions. These champions are forever enshrined on the wall of the wrestling room, where photos and records of tournaments won are displayed.

By the 1980s the program had reached a level of mediocrity, with losing records, zero conference championship, and only a few tournament champions. The sport had a revival in the 90s, with a conference title and a surge in multiple individual tournament champions. The boost is said to have occurred because of a young assistant coach, Brian Degaetano, who breathed life back into the program. Coach Degaetano was a former wrestler from Half Hollow Hills East who himself had wrestled and lost to a Kennedy wrestler. With Coach Shaeffer gone, Kennedy Wrestling ushered in a new era under Coach Brian Degaetano. Degaetano was an accomplished wrestler in high school and college, as well as a Junior Golden Gloves champion.

By the 2000s the Kennedy had become a force to be reckoned with. Under Degaetano the wrestling had doubled its size, and with the help of Mr. Weiss the Alumni Club was formed as a way for

former Kennedy wrestlers to come together and support the team. With this new stream of revenue the Kennedy Cougars now are able to get new gear every year. In addition, the wrestling room has doubled in size, gained several pull up bars, a peg wall, and most recently a new paint job and new wrestling mats. The funds garnered by the Alumni Club are also used to buy training gear and singlets for the students.

In 2015, Assistant Coach George Munnich passed away after his third stroke. Coach Munnich had been the head coach of Grand Avenue Wrestling, as well as the assistant coach for Kennedy Wrestling, for over 30 years. Coach Munnich was a former U.S. Merchant Marine and Navy sailor, fighting in both Korea and Vietnam. In his honor, the Cougars have renamed the Kennedy Wrestling room to the George Munnich III Wrestling Room. The current wrestling room has 4 walls with three being used as wall of fames. One wall with a picture of the wrestler and the tournaments he has won written underneath it. One wall is dedicated strictly to wrestlers who have qualified for the state tournament (by winning or taking second at counties). Another wall is dedicated to tournament champions. A third wall is dedicated to all-county

pictures, pictures of wrestlers who have placed at counties. On the bottom of the individual champions are team pictures of all the teams who have won conference or county championships.

With a legacy spanning over half a century, the Kennedy Cougars continue to be a force to be reckoned with. The history of wrestling is ever expanding, gaining new student athletes every year. Under Coach Degaetano, Kennedy Wrestling has had a 274-101-2 dual meet record as of the 2015-16 wrestling season, which makes it the most accomplished sport in the history of John F. Kennedy High School.