



On The Line

Garden City Public Schools
Fall 2021, Vol. 23, No. 1

Dear Community Members,

I hope you and your families are all healthy and well. We have settled into the 2021-22 school year and are so excited to have many of our traditions back in place. The community came together for our event-filled homecoming celebration, and each building has held events that promote teamwork and collaboration.

Our students have been engaging in all types of learning activities, and it is wonderful to see all the achievements that have been taking place in academics, music, art, athletics and so many other areas. Our sports teams are having an amazing season, our musicians are winning awards and students continue to earn recognitions as excellent scholars.

Districtwide, enhancements to the curriculum are providing students with greater 21st-Century Learning experiences and more opportunities to grow through hands-on, inquiry-based activities. We have many new initiatives underway while others are set to begin later this school year, and we are very excited to share more updates. I encourage everyone to "like" the district's new Facebook page, www.facebook.com/GardenCityUFSD, to see ongoing highlights from around the schools.

Sincerely,

Kusum

Kusum Sinha, Ed.D.



GC Students Look Onward and Upward *Project-Based Learning and STEAM*

The 2021-22 school year features enhancements to STEAM and project-based learning, with new technology, instructional resources and learning spaces that support collaboration and creativity.

The Garden City Schools had already integrated project-based learning into the curriculum in numerous ways. New initiatives are expanding opportunities for students to delve into hands-on experiments and STEAM projects, and professional development has focused on providing students with tools they need to put projects into action.

The new Genius Hour course for sixth graders has begun, with the first component centered around building a foundation and preparing students for the passion projects they will create later in the school year. They are gaining valuable skill sets and learning to think like researchers while being equipped with strategies that will help them eventually identify, pursue and

execute their projects.

Elementary school teachers have been preparing new project-based learning lessons that they will introduce in the spring. Students in grades two through five will be engaged in activities that encourage them to grow as involved citizens and develop solutions to modern problems. Additionally, the Quest program underwent updates during the summer, and students are beginning their own version of passion projects.

The high school offers a college-level architecture course and robotics, chemistry, science olympiad, chemistry and engineering clubs. Students have expanded opportunities in science research this year and, along with middle school students, will soon be able to make discoveries that go beyond the walls of the classroom. See the next two pages for more highlights on exciting project-based learning and STEAM developments that are underway!

Above and Beyond *Projects*



Seventh grade students work on their projects, one of which will be sent to space to be conducted by an astronaut.

Garden City Middle School seventh graders are participating in the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education's Student Spaceflight Experiments Program, and as a result, a student's project will be launched into space!

Students are designing microgravity experiments from start to finish. Three proposals will be sent to NCESSSE Headquarters, where a National Step 2 Review Board will meet via Zoom to select one team experiment to board a SpaceX vehicle and be transported 250 miles above Earth's surface to the International Space Station. There, astronauts will conduct the experiment while students simultaneously carry out control experiments in their classrooms. Upon its return to Earth, the project will be returned to the students for further studies that they can report at the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program National Conference.

These real-life, interdisciplinary projects incorporate many subject areas and skills. Students wrote proposals for their projects and are now identifying the procedures and

materials they will require. This winter, the district will announce the project that is chosen to represent Garden City, and will celebrate the communitywide accomplishment.

"We hope that this unforgettable experience of conducting an authentic space research project will inspire our students to dream big, explore their interests and follow their passions," Science Curriculum Coordinator Dr. Elena Cascio said.

The Student Spaceflight Experiments Program is a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education in the U.S. and the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Space Education internationally. It is enabled through a strategic partnership with Nanoracks LLC, which is working with NASA under a Space Act Agreement as part of the utilization of the International Space Station as a National Laboratory.



"It is time for us to look to the stars and help the future."
Amanat Jain

"This project will bring us closer to a new era of space exploration, and we are very excited about this!"
Julia LaMonica

"For us, the influence of this project is interminable."
Ali Qureshi

"This project is a lot of work but it is worth it!"
Madelyn Gebhard

Reimagined Facilities Support Innovation

Garden City High School unveiled a new, state-of-the-art science center that brings the ability to perform just about any long-term experiment in-house. The area, located next to the library, is dedicated specifically to science research and allows for more projects and discussions. Designed for both independent and collaborative work, it contains flexible seating and whiteboard walls as well as new lighting, a large storage area and a sink, with 3D printers, a plant growth system, a refrigerator and a hot plate yet to come.

The Middle School's makerspace transformation work will commence this fall, and elementary science rooms were updated over the summer.

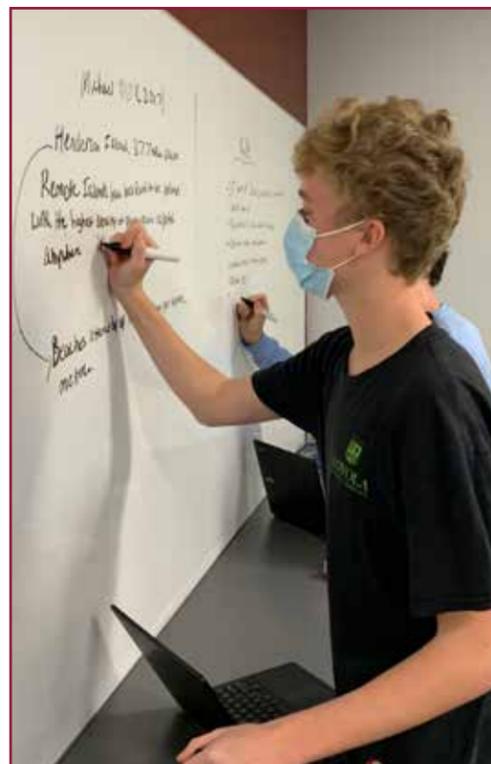


High School students make use of their new science center.

Virtual and Augmented Reality Open Doors to Big Experiences

The district is excited to soon offer a new way of learning through virtual reality and augmented reality equipment in the middle and high school makerspaces. The High School will enable students to interact with 3D objects with zSpace AR/VR laptops, viewing glasses and a stylus. The technology will allow them to manipulate, view and interact with what they see on screen as though it is occurring in the real world.

Middle school students will have similar capabilities through use of Merge Cubes – foam cubes that are used in synchronization with special headsets so that users can view STEM simulations, tinker with digital objects from all subject areas and import and view 3D designs from all angles. Students will have opportunities to explore a galaxy in the palm of their hand, hold fossils and ancient artifacts, examine a DNA molecule, investigate the Earth's core, dissect a virtual frog and hold and share their own 3D creations.



Alumna Shares Career Inspiration

Garden City Middle School has enthusiastically embraced the theme of space and flight this school year, and a visit from Garden City alumna Laura Peterson, who now serves as a NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center public and digital engagement specialist, was a perfect complement to recent lessons and activities.

Ms. Peterson visited seventh grade science, journalism and home and careers classes over the two days and described the Armstrong Flight Research Center mission and some of the aircraft and major initiatives. She discussed her role in the Strategic Communications office, which focuses on public affairs, social media, events and exhibits.

Students learned that while the Armstrong facility focuses on aeronautics and NASA is renowned for its science and STEM-related opportunities, occupations encompass a wide range of other areas including the field of communications. As each presentation concluded, students received NASA stickers and left excited for what their own future studies and vocations will involve.



Garden City alumna Laura Peterson discussed her role as a NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center public and digital engagement specialist with middle school students.

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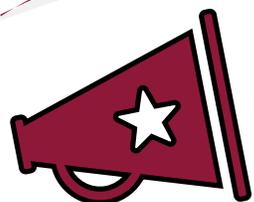
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Traditions **TRIUMPHS**

The Garden City community celebrated a traditional homecoming on Oct. 9, when many students, staff members and families participated in the parade and then headed over to the high school field to watch the Trojans take a 49-0 victory against Valley Stream Central High School.

The parade featured Garden City students, members of the Board of Education and administration and organizations from throughout the community. The game kicked off at 2 p.m., and bleachers were filled with spectators who cheered on the football team. Families also came out to support the marching band, color guard, varsity and junior varsity kicklines and cheerleaders, all of whom took the spotlight during the talent-filled halftime show.

The excitement began the day prior when a pep rally held in the high school gymnasium celebrated the senior class with performances, team introductions, skits and announcement of Homecoming King and Queen Liam Olcott and Sophia Hill. Earlier in the day, some seniors visited the primary and elementary schools for the outdoor mini-pep rallies.

