

Few school districts on Long Island have embraced technology as enthusiastically as the Deer Park Union Free School District.

The district is made up of five schools: Deer Park High School, John F. Kennedy Intermediate School, John Quincy Adams Primary School, May Moore Primary School and Robert Frost Middle School, which combined have about 4,100 enrolled students.

We recently caught up with Christopher Kauter, district administrator of instructional technology, who discussed the importance of tech, the district's mission and why he chose education.

Question: What makes Deer Park Union Free School District special in your opinion?

Answer: We have a strong group of administrators and teachers who embrace change, love the students and are willing to put forth the extra effort to see the students learn and become lifelong learners.

Q: Can you tell me about the role that technology plays in the school district?

A: Deer Park School District has believed for a long time that technology, when used properly



in the classroom, has a long-lasting impact on learning. In 2012, the district adopted G Suite for Education and has been promoting the use of Google Classroom and many third-party applications to specific grade levels and target audiences throughout the school district. Next year, we are pleased to begin our 1:1 Learning Program in grades 5 through 7. Each student will receive a Dell Chromebook. The program will reach grades 5 through 12 by 2022 or 2023.

Q: What is the biggest challenge of your job?

A: With technology changing and evolving at a rapid rate, a major challenge is keeping up to date with the newest software. To counter this challenge, it is important for me to attend conferences, workshops and be a member of the Association of Suffolk Supervisors for Educational Technologies (ASSET), which I am president of for the 2018 to 2019 school year. Without a core group to be able to bounce ideas off of, it would be extremely difficult to stay up to date and evolve the technology integration in the school district.

Q: What major trends are you seeing in U.S. education and how are they impacting your school district?

A: A major trend which I am embracing is aligning our traditional learning environment with a blended digital learning model. This includes incorporating the 4 Cs of Learning (Creativity, Collaboration, Communication and Critical Thinking) to transform traditional learning into 21st century learning.

Q: What is the mission of your school district?

A: The mission of the Deer Park School District is to provide each and every student with exemplary programs of study within a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. It is our vision that our students will achieve academic excellence, mastering those concepts, skills, and processes that will enable them to become thoughtful, productive citizens

in our society. Our students will be career/college ready.

Q: How did you get started in education?

A: I started my career as a social studies teacher. As I became a veteran teacher, my interests spread toward instructional technology and the impacts the tools were having on education. After much trial and error, I was fortunate to receive local,



state and national recognition for the instructional technology integration which I was bringing to my classroom. These honors included being accepted to the Google Teacher Academy and receiving the NYSCATE Teacher of the Year award. My experiences and interest led me from the classroom to pursue my next phase in education as a district leader.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: Working with the staff with professional development and projects. Then being invited into their classroom to see the impact on their students. Another area of interest is working with other district administrators to build curriculum and organizational capacity. This year, we started to build our Future Ready Schools Plan, which focuses on seven gears (Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Use of Space and Time; Robust Infrastructure; Data and Privacy; Community Partnerships; Personalized Professional Learning; Budget and Resources). This plan is currently a work in progress, but it has allowed us to reflect and dive deeper into our strengths while building a plan to focus on our programs which need attention.

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