



**Custom Computer Specialists**  
Right People. Right Results.®

# Spotlight Long Island

## Malverne superintendent & school board trustee discuss their district's mission and vision

The Malverne Union Free School District (UFSD) has grown from its start as a one-room schoolhouse in 1830 to four schools today that serve a diverse community.

There are currently 1,738 students enrolled in grades K-12 at the district's schools: Malverne Senior High School, Howard T. Herber Middle School, Davison Avenue Intermediate School and Maurice W. Downing Primary School.

Malverne UFSD is a multicultural, multigenerational district with a long history of success. We recently spoke with Dr. James Hunderfund, superintendent of schools, and Josephine Bottitta, a school board trustee and former school board president, who discussed their school district's mission and vision, and more.

### Q: What makes Malverne Union Free School District special?

**James Hunderfund:** Close to 50 percent of our students are classified by New York State as "educationally disadvantaged" due to their low-income status. Nevertheless, our students have consistently performed far above the established state and national achievement norms for racial and ethnic group achievement and for college entry statistics.

**Josephine Bottitta:** It's a small-school setting, which allows for personal attention, together with an entire school district's commitment to serving every student, no matter their race, gender, disability, socio-economics, led by a dedicated administration with a vision to make Malverne one of the best school districts on LI.

### Q: What is the mission of the school district?

**JH:** The total success of every student. Malverne's educational program is focused on the development of the whole child, in which students' intellectual, physical, emotional and social well-being remain the focus.

### Q: Can you tell me what role technology plays in the school district today, including the growing importance of STEM education?



James Hunderfund



Josephine Bottitta

**JH:** Various hardware devices, ranging from smart whiteboards to iPads, are a common sight in our schools and software like Office 365, OneNote and OneDrive continues to expand everyday learning. In Malverne, we are improving STEM education for all students by ensuring that all students have access to high-quality learning opportunities. A primary example of our commitment to a quality STEM program is our commitment to Project Lead the Way (PLTW), which empowers students to develop and apply in-demand, transportable skills by exploring real-world challenges. Through our pathways in computer science, engineering and biomedical science, students not only learn technical skills, but also learn to solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate and collaborate.

**JB:** Despite our small size, we have been a forerunner in bringing technology into the classroom, to our parents and community. We are also one of less than a handful of schools across NYS that offers PLTW.

### Q: How have things changed at the school district over the years?

**JH:** There has been a dynamic shift in the cultural norms, values and academic standards for the success of all students. There has been a demonstrated improvement in the intensity of our students' motivation to excel academically and in all aspects of personal growth. For example, suspensions for disciplinary infractions have decreased dramatically, whereas prosocial community/school service has

significantly increased. Honor roll status has been consistently achieved by more than 50 percent of the students. Advanced placement classes including the AP Capstone program have continued to increase enrollments as well as achievement levels. New records for higher academic achievement have been exceeded on an annual basis. In 2018, there were 71 AP Scholars and four National AP Scholars from Malverne High School.

### Q: What is the district's biggest challenges?

**JH:** One of the greatest challenges for me is not having enough time to interact with all members of the school community on a personal basis. Another major challenge is the management of fiscal resources to provide desirable programs and student/staff needs.

**JB:** Our biggest challenge is continuing to provide the best education while expenses continue to rise and revenue drops. We take our responsibilities seriously in being fiscally prudent for all taxpayers while utilizing our revenue to progress with our mission/vision.

### Q: What trends are you seeing?

**JH:** The national trend toward the development and infusion of improved learning standards is a welcome and overdue innovation for American schools. Within this movement, there is a bureaucratic fixation to impose a "one size fits all" recipe for students' success. The loss of individualized learning programs and flexible strategies to achieve the desired results presents another formidable challenge to educators, students and parents.

**JB:** Unfunded mandates impact smaller schools more harshly and makes them more challenging to manage.

Custom Computer Specialists is proud to sponsor Spotlight LI. Since 1979, Custom has been dedicated to providing Long Island's schools, local government agencies, health care facilities and businesses with advanced technology solutions and support. To learn more about Custom Computer Specialists, or to be considered for a future Spotlight LI, please email [info@customtech.com](mailto:info@customtech.com).



Students from Malverne's Davison Avenue Intermediate School, recognized in 2018 for "Beating the Odds: Building Opportunities" by Better Outcomes, LLC, celebrate a new mural in their lunch room.



Malverne High School had four students earn the National AP Scholar Award for 2018 - (L-R) Charlie Agriogianis, Endy Beltran, Roshni Shukla and Angie Luna-Menjivar.



Spring Track and Field student-athletes received their Nassau County Championship jackets from Superintendent of Schools Dr. James Hunderfund.