

HEMPSTEAD VILLAGE

BRIGHT PROSPECTS

WHAT TO WATCH
Today

ISLANDWIDE

PRIMARY ELECTIONS.

Voters across Long Island go to the polls today for primary elections. Candidates are running for party lines in November's general election for Nassau County executive, Suffolk district attorney, Smithtown Town supervisor and many other positions. Polls close at 9 p.m. Check staff **updates at newsday.com.**

SMITHTOWN

TOWN BOARD. The Smithtown Town board plans a work session today at 10 a.m., followed by a regular meeting at 2 p.m., both sessions at Town Hall (99 W. Main St.). Follow Lauren R. Harrison's **Twitter updates @LaurenHarrisonR.**

ISLIP TOWN

TOWN BOARD. The Islip Town board meets today at 2 p.m. at Town Hall (655 Main St.) and will consider a resolution to accept a donation of materials and labor by the Iglesia De Cristo Shadai Mi-el Ministerios Elim for the rehabilitation of the Nicholas Fritz Memorial Soccer Field at Robert Clemente Park. Check Candice Ruud's **Twitter updates @candiceruud** and Sophia Chang's **Twitter updates @schangnewsday.**

NOW ONLINE
Catch up with these stories today at newsday.com/towns

TOPtweet



It's the start of a new era in Long Island.

Welcome to captaincy John Tavares!

@Celley94

A decade after closure, school is reborn

BY SOPHIA CHANG
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More than 100 years after it first opened, Hempstead's Prospect School has been reborn.

As hundreds of kindergartners worked on their lessons inside, officials on the front step cut a big blue ribbon yesterday, reopening the building that had been shuttered for 10 years.

The ceremony in the school's parking lot drew elected officials and community members to celebrate the return of the school built in 1906 and transformed by a 16-month \$18.1 million renovation.

"It is a bright, beautiful day in the Hempstead Union Free School District," Superintendent Susan Johnson told a crowd of hundreds of residents, elected officials and educators gathered in front of the school on Peninsula Boulevard.

One parent was delighted with the school's new facilities.

"The school is beautiful. I couldn't believe what they did," Stephanie Mills said in a phone interview. "I like the way they did the classrooms and when you walk into the hallways, it's so bright and nice."

She said her son Christian, 5, had a great first day.

Johnson said an estimated 598 students have enrolled at the school, which will serve as a districtwide kindergarten.

The Prospect School was closed in 2003 because of structural issues. For a decade, students were housed in temporary trailer classrooms. Renovations, which began in 2012, were delayed for months because of asbestos abatement and superstorm Sandy damage.

Now, the school has more than 30 learning spaces, a library and wireless Internet access. Renovations were financed primarily with state grants after a 2011 bond vote, with the district paying \$500,000.

The reopening of the Prospect School has been heralded



Hempstead student Travis Nelson speaks at yesterday's opening.

About the school

- **BUILT:** 1906
- **CLOSED:** August 2003
- **PURPOSE:** Districtwide kindergarten center
- **COST:** \$18.1 million
- **SIZE:** 60,000 square feet
- **FIRST-DAY ENROLLMENT:** 598 students



The renovated Prospect School includes a new playground.

as a turning point for the troubled district, which this summer acknowledged a long-standing policy of raising failing grades to passing and the new placement of the high school on the state's "priority" list.

The retired principal of the Franklin School, John Moore, said this year's enrollment in the district's schools has increased by 300 students over last year.

"This district must be doing something right," he said, and added, "Let's let Prospect be a prototype of things to come."

The school's sunny cafeteria is painted bright blue and hallways are color-coded, including a section of lemon yellow. "Don't run!" Principal Carol Eason said as she directed a line of fidgeting children after they ate lunches of turkey and ham

sandwiches with fruit and milk. Architect Roger Smith of BBS Architecture in Patchogue, which renovated the school with Elite Construction of Garden City, said the building was in "so much disrepair."

"We had to bring the building back to full restoration, and also make it a space for the little guys in terms of size and colors," he said.