



Bunting is hung at Ladder House 170 for firefighter Timothy Klein, who was killed in the line of duty.

FDNY, family hang bunting to mourn fallen firefighter

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Grieving firefighters draped purple and black bunting on Ladder House 170 in Brooklyn on Monday to honor Timothy Klein, the six-year FDNY veteran who was killed a day earlier while battling a house fire in Canarsie.

Dozens of FDNY members joined Klein's family and colleagues to watch two firefighters perched at the top of a fire truck ladder hang the bunting outside the firehouse on Rockaway Parkway. Many wiped away tears as they remembered the fallen firefighter who died Sunday at the age of 31.

"Timmy was an officer's dream," said FDNY Capt. Mark Schweighardt, Klein's commanding officer. "He was the guy you looked to. All the guys in this house and all the women in this house looked to Timmy. We are going to miss him."

Added Schweighardt: "We are devastated. We are heartbroken."

Klein, a member of the team that operated the nozzle for Ladder Company 170 in Canarsie, was one of four firefighters caught in the partial ceiling collapse Sunday in the Avenue N home. The incident commander had instructed the four to get out after seeing suddenly deteriorating conditions and the floor being engulfed in flames.

All the others were able to escape, jumping out of windows

or climbing down ladders, FDNY officials said. The FDNY said a total of nine firefighters, including Klein, were injured in the fire.

An FDNY spokesman said investigators are still trying to determine the cause of the blaze and why the ceiling collapsed. The body of a man who had been previously reported missing was also found at the scene, according to officials.

Funeral arrangements for Klein are pending, the FDNY said. Klein, from Belle Harbor, Queens, was the son of a retired FDNY firefighter. Officials said he had a girlfriend and had no children.

Schweighardt said Klein did charity work on days off, building ramps for people in wheelchairs. He described him as a dependable and hardworking firefighter who "got things done."

"In the fire department, we talk about guys who were squared away. Timmy was squared away. He knew his job. He is going to be greatly missed here by the members and now it is our job to honor him and take care of his family," the FDNY captain said.

The same firehouse was hit by tragedy three years ago, when FDNY firefighter Steven Pollard fell to his death through a gap between the eastbound and westbound lanes of the Belt Parkway in January 2019 while responding to a car crash. Klein delivered a eulogy at Pollard's funeral service.

"It's a shot to the gut," Schweighardt said. "These

men and women have gone through it before, three years ago. It is a tough thing."

Schweighardt said his firefighters will deal with yet another loss by sticking together. "We're going to get back on those rigs another day, and we're going to honor Timmy by doing that," he said. "That is what we do."

The New York Police and Fire Widows and Children's Benefit Fund announced Monday that it will give \$50,000 to Klein's parents.

Canarsie residents, meanwhile, flocked to the firehouse to honor Klein's sacrifice. Dolores Laguerre, a 38-year resident of the neighborhood, brought two candles to Ladder 170.

"They risk their lives for us," said Laguerre, 63. "I thank them every day for their hard work. They have our support."

Klein was the 1,157th NYPD firefighter to die in the line of duty, officials said. In February, Jesse Gerhard, 33, a Long Beach resident assigned to Ladder 134 in Far Rockaway, collapsed inside his firehouse. He was rushed to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Gerhard had responded to a two-alarm fire the day before.

According to the FDNY, Klein was appointed to the department on Dec. 28, 2015, and after graduating from the fire academy, was assigned to Ladder Company 170.

He is survived by his father, Patrick Klein, his mother Diane, and his three sisters, the FDNY said.

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Jericho tops on LI, according to magazine ranking

BY JOIE TYRRELL
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Nineteen public Long Island high schools are among the nation's 1,000 best, according to U.S. News & World Report's annual list released Tuesday.

Leading the local list is Jericho High School, which ranked 109th, moving up from last year's 147th place, cementing the status of the Nassau County school — with an enrollment of about 1,200 — as a frequent top honoree. Results of the nation's "Best High Schools" were under embargo until 12:01 a.m. Tuesday.

This year's "Best High Schools" edition ranked nearly 18,000 public high schools at the national, state and local level.

Along with Jericho, 13 other Nassau County high schools ranked in the top 1,000 — many having made the list in prior years. They are: Great Neck South High School (195), Garden City High School (214),

Manhasset High School (215), Herricks High School (327), Syosset High School (328), North Shore High School (Glen Head) (406), Roslyn High School (415), The Wheatley School (Old Westbury) (474), Great Neck North High School (503), Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School (691), John F. Kennedy High School (Bellmore) (712), Paul D. Schreiber High School (Port Washington) (733) and Bethpage High School (973).

In Suffolk County, five made the top 1,000: Cold Spring Harbor High School (298), Half Hollow Hills High School East (Dix Hills) (392), Harborfields High School (Greenlawn) (564), Half Hollow Hills High School West (Dix Hills) (759) and Elwood-John H. Glenn High School (944).

The methodology focused on six factors: college readiness, reading and math proficiency, reading and math performance, underserved student performance, college curriculum breadth and graduation rates. College readiness specifically measured participation and performance on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams. Underserved student performance focused

William Floyd

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND
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School leaders in the William Floyd school system, one of Long Island's largest, are proposing a \$5 million property tax cut as part of their annual budget package coming up for a vote next month.

Under the tax reduction plan, one of the region's biggest, the district's proposed tax levy for the 2022-23 school year would drop nearly 5% from the current year's figure of \$102.9 million. Levies are total revenues collected through local property taxation.

Meanwhile, proposed district spending would rise 5.5% next year to a total \$265 million. William Floyd officials credited a recent historic boost in state

financial aid as the major reason their district is able to expand funding for student services and programs, while also trimming taxes.

"With gas over \$4 per gallon, and food, rent and other costs continuing to rise, the board of education wanted to help our community as much as possible," board president April Coppola said. "So, with this year's record increase of state aid, we can ensure our students get the best education possible while providing much-needed tax relief to our community. We live here, too, and our community deserves it."

Kevin Coster, the district's superintendent, noted that William Floyd also is operating with a zero percent tax increase this year. Under a state system

LI SCHOOLS AMONG U.S. BEST

on students who are Black, Hispanic, or from low-income households. For the first time, science proficiency and performance was also incorporated into the methodology for states without available science-assessment data.

In addition, while the six indicators that determined each school's rank were the same as those used in the three prior years, U.S. News adjusted its calculation to account for the COVID-19 pandemic. With most states closing schools for in-person instruction in March 2020 — typically just before most states conduct assessments — the U.S. Department of Education granted waivers allowing all states to forego testing for the 2019-2020 school year. The 2022 Best High Schools rankings can be compared with the previous evaluations from 2021, 2020 and 2019 since the methodology is only slightly changed from the previous three years, according to U.S. News.

In contrast to state assessments, ranking factors pertaining to graduation rates and college readiness this year incorporated 2019-2020 data.

Nationally, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Vir-

WHAT TO KNOW

- **Nineteen public Long Island high schools** are among the nation's 1,000 best, according to U.S. News & World Report's annual list released Tuesday.
- **Jericho High School** was Long Island's top finisher, coming in at No. 109.
- **U.S. News adjusted its calculations** of the "Best High Schools" to account for the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the 2019-2020 school year.
- **School rankings are available** on the U.S. News & World Report's website.

ginia, ranked first. Townsend Harris High School in Flushing, ranked 19th, was the top New York State school on the latest list.

Last year, 20 Long Island high schools ranked among the top 1,000, with Jericho leading the list. School officials could not be contacted before the release of the list Tuesday. Jericho high school students often take top honors in many national academic and science



JEREMY BALES

Jericho High School led the list of Long Island public high schools.

competitions. On the district's website, officials said Jericho High School prides itself on offering a complete program, from academics to extracurriculars to personal support.

In September, Jericho was among six on the Island to be named a "Blue Ribbon School" by the U.S. Department of Education, which recognize the high school as an "Exemplary High Performing School."

Jericho also made the top 100 of U.S. News & World Report's 2022 ranking of STEM schools nationwide, coming in at 88th. Manhasset High School was

the other local school that cracked the top 100 STEM schools nationwide, coming in at 78th. U.S. News looked at the top 1,000 public schools from the Best High Schools rankings, and then evaluated their students' participation and success in Advanced Placement science and math tests.

"Looking at factors like graduation rates and underserved student performance, families can use this information to learn more about their local schools," Eric Brooks, principal data analyst at U.S. News, said of the 2022 rankings.

Nassau County schools in the top 1,000:

- Jericho High School (109)
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Suffolk County schools:

- Cold Spring Harbor High School (298)
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district proposes tax cut

that sets cap limits on annual tax hikes, the district would have been authorized to boost taxation a little more than 2.9% this school term and 4% next school year, had it chosen to do so.

"It has always been the goal of the board of education to only ask our residents for what we need as far as a tax levy increase, not what we can get with the tax levy formula," Coster said.

Board trustees unanimously approved the 2022-23 budget proposal at a meeting on April 12. Local residents will have a chance to vote on the spending plan May 17, which is the date set for statewide voting this year. Coppola and three other incumbents on William Floyd's board will be running unopposed in that election, according to the district.

William Floyd serves about 8,900 students in southeastern Brookhaven Town, ranking it fifth in enrollment size among the Island's districts. William Floyd's taxable wealth is a little more than half the state average, making the latest proposed tax reduction a welcome relief in the minds of many residents.

"That's nice to hear, definitely. It's going to help families that are struggling," said John Sicignano, longtime president of the Mastic Park Civic Association, which has about 100 members living within the school district. "We're a blue-collar, working-class community."

Sicignano is manufacturing director for a company that makes military airplane parts.

In setting next year's tax levy, William Floyd officials noted

their district would receive an extra \$22.6 million in state financial aid — an increase of more than 15%. Similar funding increases are going to many other districts on the Island, where overall aid will be up more than \$450 million next year.

The funding additions have prompted many individual taxpayers, as well as some business groups, to question whether some of the money should be used to lower taxes.

One such group is the Association for a Better Long Island, which represents many of the region's real estate developers. Last month, the organization's executive director, Kyle Strober, described as "astounding" the fact that most districts are still calling for tax hikes. School representatives noted,

on the other hand, that the state's complicated system of distributing aid money means some districts get double-digit increases while other districts get minimum raises of 3%.

Last week, Strober praised William Floyd's action.

"Clearly, the William Floyd school district gets it, and wants to do the right thing for the taxpayer," Strober said. "Such a significant reduction will put money back in the taxpayer's pocket and possibly spur more economic activity within the community."

A Newsday review of district tax data over the past 10 years indicates that William Floyd's proposed cut could set a record or near-record, at least in dollar terms. A preliminary state report shows only two other Is-



JAMES CARBONE

Superintendent Kevin Coster

land districts considering cuts for 2022-23, and both those reductions are well below 2%.

In 2017-18, a smaller district in Nassau County proposed a cut of more than 15%. But this was a special and complicated case, involving the equivalent of a return to taxpayers of revenues received in lieu of taxes from a shopping mall.