

Alison Matthews named 2025 Business Teacher of the Year



As the daughter of an immigrant family from Guyana, Alison Matthews said the importance of education was instilled in her from a young age. A career in teaching felt like the natural path forward. Credit: Daryl Matthews

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As the daughter of an immigrant family from Guyana, Alison Matthews said the importance of education was instilled in her from a young age. A career in teaching felt like the natural path.

Matthews pursued a degree in business education from Delaware State University, bringing together two of her passions. Matthews also earned a Master of Science degree in educational technology and a professional diploma in education administration from Long Island University and a doctorate in education from St. John's University.

She became one of two business teachers in the [Harborfields Central School District](#) in 2001. In 2013, she earned a certification in work-based learning.

Now as Harborfields' work-based coordinator, Matthews places students in internships, such as at Drake Media Studios in Melville, [St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center](#) in Smithtown and [Kumon learning center](#) in Huntington.

"It's such an amazing thing to help students explore their interests and...become college- and career-ready...on their path to the future," she said.

In this role, she also launched the Career Readiness Network. Beginning with one class, the program now includes four New York State Education Department recognized Career & Technical Education (CTE) pathways offered to students starting their junior year: Business & Entrepreneurship (2020); Education & Child Development (2023); Media Production (2024); and Marketing (starting 2025).

Former student Bobby Constatantos earned 30 CTE pathway credits and is now on his way to earning dual bachelor's degrees at Long Island University in Brookville.

"The business classes...are the only reason I am able to get two bachelors in four years," he wrote in a statement.

Cathleen DeSimone, who graduated in 2025 with credits from the business and education pathways, said she is excited for her future as a marketing major.

"I was exposed to it at a really young age and knew it was right for me," she said.

Throughout her 24 years at Harborfields, Matthews has practiced real-world, project-based teaching, allowing students to learn through individual synthesis and analysis.

"They're getting as much out of the classes as I'm getting from teaching the information to them," she said.

For example, students in the Career Awareness class are tasked with creating their own business plan, and those who take part in the Education & Child Development pathway have the opportunity to intern at the elementary school.

Matthews was named the 2025 Business Teacher of the Year by Long Island Business Teachers' Association.

"She's a teacher, she is a mentor and she's even someone that I can go to with... non-school stuff," DeSimone said. "I really looked up to her and I always say I want to become [her] because I want to give kids the experience that I was given."