

LIASCD Mini-Grant Winner - 2008

Kathleen Sottile

Project: Reads with Jen Calonita

School District: Sewanhaka Central High School District

The School's Decision Making Committee, consisting of students, parents, teachers and administrators, implement certain projects every school year. One such curriculum enhancement program would be a school "READS" night. Every seventh, eighth and part of the ninth grade student body will be given a copy of the book *Secrets of My Hollywood Life* by Jen Calonita. On April 3rd 2008 the school will host a "READS" night where students and their parents are invited to a book discussion program featuring the author, Jen Calonita. Ms. Calonita is a former Senior Entertainment Editor at *Teen People* and has interviewed many famous celebrities as well as writing for many popular magazines including *TV Guide*, *Glamour* and *Marie Claire*. *Secrets* is the first book in a five book series about teen starlet Kaitlin Burke who tires of the fame game and decides to hide out in high school disguised as someone else. Ms. Calonita will discuss the book, how she became an author, the writing process and where she gets the ideas for her books. There will also be time for question and answer session. Educators' recognize that getting students to read is a challenge. Getting them to read books just for the sheer pleasure of reading can be seen as impossible since teens like to spend their free time watching TV, going to the mall, instant messaging, tinkering with their mobile phones or playing video games. The fact that students reap great benefits from reading cannot be doubted or questioned. It is for this reason that schools must instill in students a real love for reading and groom them into becoming lifelong readers. The Committee would also like to invite Ms. Calonita to speak to junior and senior students taking the creative writing course. She would discuss the writing process in-depth and give students a sense on how to become a successful journalist.