



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FEBRUARY 26, 2020

Good evening, everyone! This month has been a busy one throughout our school district, at various construction sites and in our central office. John Lennon once said, “Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans” and with extensive and delicate planning for the 2020-2021 school year in full effect, I’m grateful for the opportunity to pause and reflect on what’s been happening in the “life of our school district” and to share a few highlights of some of the innovative and student-centered work that has taken place this month..

February is becoming known as Kindness Month and students in our schools have been involved in various activities related to this theme.

Village and Indian Hill School students were deeply engaged in Kindness Activities last week! This year’s secret mission theme at Village allowed students to participate in a variety of different kindness activities – everything from being a Kindness Ninja to hand delivering inspirational kindness cards/messages to staff members and students at Satz and Indian Hill. In addition, Village students were also able to visit the Random Acts of Kindness Challenge Board outside of the Main Office to also select a simple, creative kindness challenge students could do individually or as a class unit.

Indian Hill also participated in the note-writing campaign while the 4th grade students took kindness on the road and visited with pen pals at a local senior residence. I was so impressed by one teacher’s reflection on this and her observation of one of the students and the poise, grace and heart that students brought to their visit.

Meanwhile, Indian Hill students have been engaged in some innovative scientific learning this month. Mrs. DaSilva’s science classes participated in an Interactive Science Museum entitled, “How Humans Impact Earth's Spheres.” Students worked extremely hard learning and reporting out on how humans contribute both positively and negatively to all of Earth's spheres. Parents, staff, and administration attended and were highly impressed with the students’ presentations.

Mr. Woods again presented to all 5th grade classes on the topic of electricity with hands on demonstrations and experiments focused on static electricity and electrical current. Students

were actively engaged and highly enthusiastic! They used props such as hair, balloons, Rice Krispies, and bottles to show positive and negative charges. Students used a tool known as a Van de Graaf to explore the topic.

4th grade science teachers have been hosting "volcano week" as part of their science curriculum. Throughout the week, students have participated in a multitude of engaging explorations including building a 3D model of Earth's surface, taking a virtual field trip to a volcano (using our Google Expeditions kit), and exploding a volcano in a hands-on demonstration activity. Our young scientists have never been more engaged!

Over at Satz, our new cycle/elective classes continue to be well-received by the students including such courses as Forensics, Game Design, Standing Up to Intolerance and Argument/Debate. Students are in their third of four electives for the year.

Speaking of course selection, current and rising high school students began to register for classes next month for the 2020-21 school year. A new exciting opportunity for rising twelfth grade students is the opportunity to participate in an internship experience in the community during one semester of their senior year. This is open to all students who will earn high school credits during these real-world career experiences.

An innovative approach that teachers have been exploring and adopting over the last couple of years is known as the 20% project. Students in Mrs. Pharo's English classes have started engaging in these this year. These projects give students the opportunity to use 20% of their class time in a given week to incorporate real life research into their class. The students pick a project they will research, collaborate with partners, and present as a way to accomplish a goal or enhance society and/or their school environment. This is a great way for students to engage with authentic learning and problem solving while enhancing their literacy skills.

Finally, the HFEE is looking to support student and staff innovation with mini-grants. Applications are due this week for these annual grants. Application information can be found on the HFEE website and has been included in the weekly bulletins at the schools.

I am pleased to share some staff and student congratulations for great things that happened this month such as that owed to Mrs. Vinceguerra and the entire Village PE department for successful coordination of Village's Kids Heart Challenge. Through the combined efforts of the PE staff, Village School students and parents, the school raised a whopping \$30,846!

Congratulations are in order for Indian Hill students in the Continental Math League. Both the 5th and 6th grade teams have turned in perfect scores on two meets. Two 5th grade students and one 6th grade student have perfect scores entering the 4th meet and are national leaders. Taking a look at the rankings: 4th grade is in 3rd place in NJ and 30th in the USA; 5th grade is in 1st place in NJ and 4th in the USA; and 6th grade is in 3rd place in NJ and 4th in the USA!

Indian Hill asked me to congratulate the most recent Hornets of the Month!! They are 4th graders Daniella Bavaro and Landon Candelaria, 5th graders Ryan Sealove and Jake Bartczak and 6th graders Maren Vaclavik and Ethan Sankpal

Congratulations to the Holmdel D14 Cheer team, of which many Satz students are members, for winning the YCADA Globals Cheer Championship earlier this month!

Speaking of our student athletes who compete in community sports, I was recently informed that the HYAA Wrestling team crowned two individual A division champions for the first time ever who are our students. They are 3rd grader Logan Placca and 5th grader Michael Todisco. These boys will represent Holmdel as part of the Jersey Shore All Star team which will compete against the other All Star Teams from around the state.

Congratulations to the following Satz athletes who were selected to participate in the "Women in Sports Day" leadership program at Monmouth University earlier this month: Allison Cannon, Elisa Gunawardana, Emma Mioduszewski and Angelina Petriello

Congratulations to both the Satz Boys and Girls basketball teams on their outstanding seasons to date. As of now, the girls are 15-1 on the season and the boys are 16-0 - both teams are league champs and are now entered in the prestigious "Run for the Roses" post-season tournament....good luck!!

Congratulations to the following students for winning awards at the New Jersey Math League competition...way to go!! In 7th grade, Musa Dar and Ishani Singh tied for 3rd, Alan Sun took 2nd and Derek Wang took 1st place. In 8th grade, Brandon Hu took 3rd while Allen Fang and Nidhi Nair tied for second and Rebecca Wang took first place. Congrats to all!

Congrats to nearly 60 National Honor Society members for supporting, fundraising, and/or taking part in their first Polar Plunge at Pier Village on February 8th. Mr. Brown and Mrs. Riggi organized an amazing event for the students. Mr. Brown led the group that day by complimenting them for truly taking on a service learning project they can be proud of for years

to come. Over \$2,000 was raised to support Camp Sunshine, giving underprivileged children the opportunity to take part in camp this summer.

Congratulations to the Village School PSA for successful coordination of their two Bingo Night fundraisers! These were two fun nights of number calling, pizza and prizes! Special thanks also goes out to all of our student and parents volunteers who helped to set up and organize prizes those nights.

Congratulations and a big thanks to the Indian Hill PLG for another amazing and successful Bingo Night! I was told it was one of the largest turnouts in years! All students and parents had a fun evening filled with pizza and great prizes.

Continued “thanks” to the PSG for their weekly “Snack Shack” offering - especially the pretzels that Mr. Loughran described as “yummy!”

Thank you to the PTSO for continuing to fundraise in a number of ways throughout the year, including their monthly Bake Sales. The dollars raised will be put to good use following completion of our 2020 projects.

Special thanks to the HFEE for their generous donation to supporting the first phase of a major renovation of Room 209 at Satz to a state-of-the-art Innovation Lab that will support engineering, robotics, and production classes for our middle school students. This is part of what we project will be a transformation over the 20-21 and 21-22 school years.

Mrs. MacConnell is already working with our staff to develop innovative courses for this new space that will prepare our middle schoolers for then continuing their studies in our new Engineering and Communication Wing at the High School.

We have many wonderful events coming up in March as we celebrate the Arts in our district with concerts and performances. I encourage you to continue to check our district website for up to date information on all that is going on in our great district.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert A. McGarry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools