



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Superintendent's Report to the Board of Education May 27, 2020

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for joining us for this virtual meeting. Today marked our 45th Day of At-Home Learning, meaning we have spent the equivalent of one quarter of the school year teaching and learning in ways we could not have imagined when this school year started.

A pioneer is someone who is first or among the earliest in any field of inquiry, enterprise, or progress. A **pioneer** is **someone** who sees potential, an innovator who is willing to try new things. Regardless of whether you are an educator, a student or a parent/caregiver, you have been called to be pioneers over these last few months. The pioneering work being done by our staff, students and families in light of COVID-19 has been and continues to be exceptional. We are all trying new things, and as such, each of us has endured failures that we have learned from and successes that we have celebrated.

Tonite, I wanted to share in pictures and words some of the innovative ways our staff members are connecting with students and connecting students with their learning and the world beyond quarantine.

While many districts started their remote learning journeys with weeks of printed packets, our Future Ready practices and Technology team made our transition to a more robust program much easier. Who can forget this image of what we affectionately referred to as “Chrome Depot?”

Incidentally, this is what that space looked like just weeks later as our 2020 efforts have continued.

In fact Satz will soon be unrecognizable on the inside and Outside.

Another precursor to our going remote was making sure everyone who needed meals received them. As such we set up this distribution station and thanks to our partners at Chartwells, we have not missed a meal!

And of course, students like those you heard tonite are keeping us in a routine with the Pledge of Allegiance.

While we hope we do not need them, the collection of videos has grown so large we are ready for the long haul of remote learning.

Our staff and our students have become video stars in this process of remote learning - like this 1st grade class who let us know we are all in this together and reminded us to stay home and wash our hands.

Our 3rd graders are being featured in a weekly edition of "3rd Graders in the Spotlight", reflecting on important lessons learned during their time at Village. Every Friday, 3rd graders can upload videos responding to questions unique to each class that help them to reflect on their time at Village. The videos are shared with the school in an effort to shine "the spotlight" on that student.

Many of our staff members have figured out ways to "be" with their students in this remote environment, such as this teachers' effort to create a "flat-stanley" version of herself and asking students to send pictures of themselves in different learning activities with her. This student keeps his teacher with him during his independent reading.

6th grade science teachers at Indian Hill were able to bring their students' raising of trout to a successful conclusion by releasing the trout into a tributary of the Manasquan River while students watched the release via Zoom.

Virtual Field Trips have become great learning tools in a variety of content areas, such as this virtual field trip to the American Museum of Natural History or the one 6th grade Spanish students have taken to Barcelona for their Units on Art and Food. Students are getting to experience some of the most famous landmarks of Barcelona with a focus on the architecture of Antoni Gaudí and common dishes like pinchos, paella, and tapas. Using Google Arts and Culture, Google Maps Street View, and other photographs, the students have been able to feel like they are actually walking the streets of Spain.

Mrs. Thomas gave away a Harry Potter mask to one lucky student who tuned in for her Monday Morning Mindstretch live last Monday. Students who voluntarily completed the "Investigating Toys" project in her Enrichment and Extension Activities Google Classroom sent in fantastic investigation reports and prototypes of new toys such as this digital legos game. Ms. Thomas also had a Google Meet with her Voyager students recently during which they all worked together to escape a room remotely.

The 4th-grade science teachers have been collaborating on something that has been a HUGE hit with students during remote learning. They have been putting together At-Home Engineering & Design Challenges for their students to complete. These span from simple to elaborate projects that students can complete at home with materials commonly found around the house. Their first challenge invited students to create a model of Earth's layers. Some students used legos, others used PlayDoh, and some even baked their way through this engaging science activity! Students showed off their creations to each other on Flipgrid.

As you can see here, just last week, students were challenged to construct a representation of a fossil to go along with their unit on Earth's Surface Processes. Teachers were amazed at the creativity and innovation our students displayed. Here are the slideshows we have been putting together to give our students voice and choice in these scientific weekly challenges. They are loving it!

As you heard tonite, music-making continues to be a priority. Music students throughout the district, such as these instrumental students at Indian Hill are keeping up with lessons and practice at home. At Satz, Dr. Riso and Ms. Nigro, produced musical selections from both the Satz Band (Beethoven's "Ode to Joy") and Chorus ("The Star-Spangled Banner"); not only did these productions showcase the wonders of technology today, but they also showed Holmdel's ability to *innovate* in order to *elevate* - and certainly lifted our spirits during these trying times. You can see these on my youtube channel.

With just sixteen (16) school days left until summer, students at the Satz school continue to do a great job in attending to their studies remotely and, along with the regular recording of their lessons, the teachers have made tremendous use of tools such as "Flipgrid" and "Padlet" in order to encourage student creativity. Students have commented positively on the usefulness of these tools.

Additionally, a Google classroom has also been set up for the entire school where student birthdays have been celebrated and Friday afternoon "meets" have been a regular activity.

Satz school counselors have done an outstanding job in working with our students, communicating with them in large groups with regular emails of encouragement as well as working in small groups and individually where necessary on all manner of concerns. Finally, and where appropriate, several after-school clubs and activities have continued in this remote environment.

The AP Tests were quite different this year. They took place over the last two weeks, and we had 270 students take almost 600 tests. That marks a 12.5% increase in the number of students taking at least one AP test. As you will recall increasing the number of students taking one AP test is a goal for all of us. The testing was unique across the world this year, as all students took an abbreviated test - on a device from their home as opposed to the normal paper-version taken in school.

The High School counselors have been running small group counseling sessions for our seniors who have been dealing with losing some of the exciting social gatherings (prom, etc...) to their senior year. They have also begun group sessions for juniors to assist in the uniqueness of this year's college search process. Please visit the new HS Guidance website on virtual college fairs and a plethora of college updates due to Covid-19.

Thank you to all of our students who have shared their powerpoint slide with their future plans so that we can celebrate your outstanding accomplishment with you. And thank you to all of our club members who participated in the Club Kindness Challenge to recognize our Frontline Essential Workers, and our 2020 Class.

Our high school students have continued to bring honor to our school district with accomplishments in academics and the arts and a positive difference in our community with good works.

Many aspects of school life continue on remotely as well as you can see with our strength and conditioning coaches' classroom and our student athletes staying engaged in teamwork!

Even Student elections have gone virtual! Good luck to all HHS students who are running for Student Council Officer positions. A list of candidates, with their

speeches, was shared with the student body for review. Good luck to all candidates!

The SEL Committee has put together a padlet for resources available to anyone seeking assistance. There is also a link titled “Emotional Supports” on our Coronavirus Information page.

Although if you ask them, they would simply say they were doing their jobs...but I would like to give special thanks to our school nurses and our hard working custodial, maintenance and grounds staff for keeping us all healthy with daily temperature checks and super clean buildings and grounds for all of us reporting to work.

Village would like to thank our parent group for their efforts to put the finishing touches on our student’s yearbooks, making sure our third graders will be able to have this important memory-focused possession.

Indian Hill would like to thank its parent group for facilitating a very successful Mother’s Day plant sale. Despite the social distancing guidelines, they were able to coordinate and distribute a variety of plants to the community successfully! The staff would also like to thank them for their diligence in celebrating our staff and 6th graders by purchasing t-shirts for each. Their efforts and appreciation for our students and staff are evident and greatly appreciated!

Thank you to our Satz PSG for their generous gift of “Class of 2020” T-Shirts for all of our graduating 8th grade students...it is surely appreciated! Details on how they will be distributed will be forthcoming.

Thank you to the PTSO and Project Graduation for their efforts in continuing to support our students. These groups are partnering with HHS to support our Seniors with various activities to celebrate their final days as part of the Holmdel school

district. More information about these activities will be shared out as details are finalized.

Thanks to the HFEE for their support of mini-grants that total \$18,432.78!

And once again, thank you to everyone for their perseverance, patience, empathy and creativity during this time and always.