



## Message from the Superintendent

Happy October! It's hard to believe that September has come and gone and the new school year is well underway. I'm hopeful that the year got off to a great start for your children, and that they are excited for what lies ahead. There are some new faces around the district who you may have met at Back to School Night. We welcome these new staff members, as they will surely add greatly to our Readington team.

This is the first issue of the *Superintendent Sentinel: A Parent Newsletter*. I plan to use this newsletter as a way to provide parents with information about events happening in our district and other topics that may be of some interest. There will also be a section dedicated to highlighting accomplishments in each of our four schools. Please look for this newsletter to be published quarterly. Happy reading!



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### Curriculum Corner

#### New Happenings in Math & Literacy

The district has launched for the 2019-2020 school year the Units of Study in Phonics in Kindergarten through Second Grade. We are piloting a Vocabulary and Language Enhancement (VALE) program in various third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms. The Phonics and the VALE programs are a supplement to our current literacy instruction. Students in Kindergarten through Fifth grade will be utilizing *Ready Classroom* as its core mathematics program. *Ready Classroom* is a research-based curriculum that prepares students for mastery of the rigorous mathematics standards through a balance of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application.



#### Strategic Planning Update

The district's Strategic Planning process has begun. This process will engage the school community in setting goals for the future of our district. The district has contracted Judith Wilson, LLC to assist in facilitating this process. Ms. Wilson was in-district on September 24 and 25 to conduct sessions with board members, administrators, HSA representatives, and RTEA representatives. In addition, Ms. Wilson conducted staff forums at Readington Middle School and Three Bridges School. Ms. Wilson will return on October 24. On this date Ms. Wilson will conduct two Community Forums in the BOE Conference Room at 9:00 am and at 6:30 pm. All parents, guardians, and community members are invited to attend. In addition, Ms. Wilson will facilitate two more faculty forums at Holland Brook School and Whitehouse School.

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Vaping: Heightened Health Concerns of our Youth



The safety and well-being of our students continues to be a focus for our school district. We provide students with educational opportunities to promote their social, emotional, and physical health. To that end, an increase in concern surrounding the dangers of teen vaping has become a focus across the nation. According to the New Jersey Department of Health, use of e-cigarettes has surpassed traditional cigarettes among New Jersey high school students. We must address the issues revolving around vaping together, as a school community, in order to keep our students healthy and safe. E-cigarettes and vaping devices have been known to contain harmful materials or substances that have led to lung diseases, other related illnesses, and even death. While we are beginning to see the short-term effects of these harmful substances, medical professionals are still uncertain as to the long-term effects. This makes vaping a particular public health issue. Please have a conversation with your child regarding the dangers of vaping. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published a *Tip Sheet for Parents*. It provides information on how to talk with your child about e-cigarettes. [Click here](#) to access the tip sheet. If you are looking for further information, please visit the New Jersey Department of Health webpage or contact your child's school.



## Technology Tips

### A highlight from Screenagers:

Let's talk about the art of asking people to put their phone away. The way you approach the ask is key to its effectiveness. I have asked dozens of middle and high schoolers whether they ever ask friends to put their phones away. About 80% of them tell me they have. When I inquire about their tactic, many say what works for them is to just be straight forward and say something like "Hey, can you please put your phone away." A couple of people have said that they don't ask but instead leave the room, hoping the person will get the clue.



## Vestibules and New Office

The district continues its commitment to the safety and security of students and staff. This summer work began with installing double entry vestibules and security windows in all schools. The project is nearing conclusion and we will keep you posted. Please expect information regarding security and sign-in protocols once the vestibules are fully installed. Three Bridges School Main Office received an office renovation this summer to accommodate the new vestibule. The pictures to the right are of the TBS front office and it looks great!

Picture #1 (top right): Clerical Aide, Natasha Rankin's desk and the security window.

Picture #2 (middle right): Principal's Secretary, Deb Sevell's desk and windows.

Picture #3 (bottom right): Counter, storage, and teacher mailboxes.



## Building Spotlight: Whitehouse School

Submitted by Principal, Dr. Ann DeRosa

Our first quarter spotlight features happenings at Whitehouse School. Our school's character development program continues to be at the forefront of all that we do at Whitehouse School. We embrace a research-based framework that was developed by the *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (CASEL). This is a national support network that has been on the cutting-edge of the field for twenty years. CASEL recognizes that as children evolve into good citizens, we should be helping them to achieve proficiency in five major areas. The five Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies include: *Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making*. As a school community, WHS focuses on the competencies while integrating them with academics and our school's character trait of the month. For instance, September is *responsibility* month at WHS. Therefore, in social studies class, we try to link learning by helping children understand how their *responsibility* as a student relates to their unit on *Communities*. Students follow rules as citizens follow rules. Our country was founded on a set of principles outlined in the United States Constitution, which is comparable to our core values chant or code of conduct. When we make good choices or obey the law, we are exercising strength with *Self-Awareness, Self-Management, and Responsible Decision-Making*.

Additionally, this year marked the fourth year that we joined a global movement entitled, Character Day. On September 27, our whole school stopped to reflect on character as we responded to prompts in our SEL Journals. This year's event focused on character development and technology usage. Pictured to the right, kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Lisa Painter, and student, Bianca Ascencio-Gonzalez, use their individual journals to brainstorm *responsible* rules everyone should follow when utilizing a Smart phone, tablet, computer, or television.



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### Mark Your Calendars

#### Upcoming Events:

- **October 24 / Strategic Planning Community Forums**
- **October 29 / SEL-Wellness Parent Academy**
- **October 29 / Substitute Job Fair**

#### Upcoming BOE Meetings:

- **October 15, November 12, December 10**

