



HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MAY 30, 2018

Good evening, everyone! First of all, I would like to congratulate all of our students for their efforts on (and for making it through the PARCC assessment)! And a big thank you to our staff for preparing our students for success. A special shout out as well to someone who helped our Indian Hill students have a great PARCC week and furthered a district goal at the same time - Mrs. Jennifer Plocinski who facilitated May Mindfulness Yoga during PARCC week. Both staff and students had a great and relaxing time!

We have been treated to a series of amazing end of year performances as of late with a few more on our schedule, including the High School One Act Play festival in the Duncan Smith Theatre this weekend and our Middle and High School Band concerts next week. Kudos to our choirs and handbell ensembles for exceptional performances over the last two weeks - I woke this morning with a tune from Sister Act in my head after it was performed so well by our Women's Choir last night!

Speaking of performing, congratulations to our First Graders for an amazing school performance! Using a jungle theme, Ms. Scott and the students gave a wonderful performance for their peers and their families.

Some of the notable events during the month of May at Village included the Elementary Art Show and an Arbor Day event! Thanks to our Art teachers at Village and Indian Hill for putting on a wonderful display of student work and thanks to Mrs. Vierschilling for organizing the rainy Arbor Day events. Thanks also to the PSA for collaborating with the school staff to support Arbor Day and Earth Week. I, for one, love my water bottle as do all of the students who received these during the week. .

Thanks to the PSA for their continued support of Village School through their gifting initiatives! We look forward to the upcoming purchases to support in the areas of the arts, technology, and athletics.

May started off on a sweet note at Indian Hill - especially for our staff, A big thank you to Deb Brew and the PLG for teacher Cookie Appreciation day. The staff (and students) loved it!

Congratulations to the Indian Hill May-June Hornets of the Month, including 4th graders Maya Houston and Deven Behal, 5th graders Gabby Truett and Tyler Lavell, and 6th graders Akshaya Padmanabhan and Robert Sun.

Kudos to the members of the Indian Hill Student Council who teamed up with the PLG and the cast of the school musical to raise over \$3,000 for Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation.

Meanwhile, learning remains in high gear at Indian Hill with 5th grade students in Miss Corrigan's Literacy classes continuing to work on their engineering design challenges which help them identify problems, design realistic solutions, and engage in the Engineering Design Process while reinforcing literacy skills at the same time.

As you may recall from previous reports, our 6th grade students have been doing a year long study in which they have raised trout from eggs in the sixth grade labs. Their task and goal was to maintain a healthy and viable ecosystem throughout the year. With a window of time to release these trout, the students just recently released their trout into the Manasquan River. Congratulations to all on a successful laboratory experience for all!

Many congratulations to the Indian Hill students who participated in the Spring Band and Chorus concert and the spring musical, Grease!

And of course, we would like to give a huge thank you to Anissa Quirk and Vanessa Merhi and all of the Career Day volunteers for all their hard work and efforts for another successful Career Day. An enormous amount of planning and commitment goes into making this day possible.

Here's a neat note from the world of academia at Rutgers University. Dr. Lesley Morrow, Dr. Kenneth Kunz, and Maureen Hall's new book, *Breaking Through the Language Arts Block: Organizing and Managing the Exemplary Literacy Day* not only acknowledges Indian Hill's Literacy Coaches, Susan Fullilove and Rebecca Waddell, but also includes two resources they designed and shared with Dr. Kunz when he provided professional development on guided reading at Indian Hill three years ago. The first resource is a guided reading lesson template, and the second resource is a

reference chart listing reading strategies that our teachers use when conferring with students one-on-one.

Many thanks to Officer Martin for presenting an assembly program for grades 4-6 on safe practice for social media and cyber-bullying. I was impressed by all that students knew about this topic - but of course, the challenge remains to apply that knowledge to their lives.

The hallways of Satz school are a little quieter today as the long awaited DC Trip got underway! Thanks to all of our staff chaperones without whom we would not be able to continue this opportunity for our students. Thanks also to the parents who dropped off this morning in time for the 6:30 a.m. departure.

Congratulations to the Satz students of the month for May: Michelle Sherman, Madison Gourlay, Trey Tulenko, Kate Lautenberg, and Brianna Cabunag.

I want to give a special shout out to all of our Satz student athletes but not because of their records of wins and losses as it was a tough season. In the field of education, we are learning more and more about the importance of perseverance and what one researcher calls "grit." Our middle school athletes faced a challenging spring season due to all the snow and rain, but the coaches and student-athletes never complained and kept on developing their skills and teamwork and kept on competing. Kudos to all for demonstrating that Hornets are gritty!

Last month I mentioned those who will be singing with All State ensembles in the fall, Tonight we add instrumentalists to our roster of All - State musicians. Congrats to Sameer Erramilli & Brian Chu for being accepted into the All-State Jazz Band and don't forget you can hear both Sameer and Brian perform next Thursday right here!

Speaking of talent, two talented Holmdel High School sophomores, Aidan Choo and Owen Walor, recently received accolades in two separate prestigious writing competitions.

Aidan Choo was recognized as the winner of the Sijo competition in the Sejong Cultural Society's annual contest and Owen Walor's recognition came as part of the Writer's Theater of New Jersey's that was awarded at the Governor's Awards in Arts Education ceremony last week.

In the wide world of sports, we will have numerous athletes from the Spring sports season nominated for all division, all county, all shore, and all state. Those

accolades will be announced in the coming weeks. Congratulations to all of our spring student athletes and especially our Track and Field, Lacrosse, Boys Tennis Team and Girls Gold Team for their winning records.

Finally, it is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to Hamzah Shaikh, who has expertly represented the students of Holmdel High School for the last two years as a student representative to the board . At the time that I first met Hamzah, I was new to my role as Superintendent of Schools. Transitioning into this role from previously serving as Assistant Superintendent, I set out to convene a transition team made up of a variety of stakeholders. Hamzah was one of the first individuals I asked to join my transition team and his contributions to it and to my work in my first year as Superintendent were invaluable.

I'd like to share an excerpt of the letter of recommendation I wrote on behalf of Hamzah as he pursued his post-secondary plans:

"Hamzah is a kind, thoughtful, intelligent, driven, reflective and highly capable young person who I am confident will succeed in achieving the goals he sets for himself. One thing that really makes Hamzah stand apart from other students I've known is how he combines his significant intellectual gifts with a deep commitment to service, and approaches that which he seeks to achieve with an altruistic mindset, thinking first about how the experiences he might gain as an Emperor Science Award winner or as a Governor's STEM Scholar might benefit others, such as those he mentors in his school, long before he ever considers how the honor is a testament to his academic achievements or thinks about the benefit it might hold for him and his future aspirations."

Hamzah embodies the idea of innovate to elevate.

My admiration for Hamzak extends far beyond that of what my role as Superintendent of Schools offers. I am of course proud of him as a student and student leader, but I am genuinely in awe of him as a human being and wish him well as he pursues his studies at Rutgers and beyond. On behalf of all of us, thank you for your service and for all you have done for us and for your school.

Respectfully submitted to the Board,

Robert A. McGarry, Ed.D.