

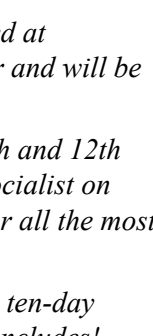


HADDONFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

... news from the Board of Education

FROM the SUPERINTENDENT

Welcome to the March edition of the Haddonfield School District newsletter. This month we continue to explain how each school division has implemented a plan for our students and our interested parents to understand and unpack the notion of cultural competence. Therefore this newsletter will focus on what our middle-school leaders have done this school year in terms of the cultural competence goal. Also this month we are looking ahead to the 2020-21 school year and moving our high school into more of a social-emotional focus while maintaining our strong traditions of academic excellence.



Below Ms. Matozzo explains her thoughts on the HMS schedule changes aimed at including more of a STEAM focus. That schedule change was started last year and will be implemented in September.

Please support our HMS musical "Legally Blonde" being staged on April 11th and 12th at 7:30 p.m... Be sure to follow Polly Mitchell our District Communications Specialist on Facebook ("Haddonfield School District") and Twitter (@HaddonSchools) for all the most up-to-date information related to our district.

Our next newsletter will be in late April. Please relax and enjoy the upcoming ten-day spring break starting on April 19th. Only eight weeks to go after that break concludes! Happy spring!

- Larry Mussoline, Ph.D.

DISTRICT NEWS

DIVERSITY INITIATIVES in the MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tracy Ann Matozzo arrived at the Middle School as principal in September 2017. In an effort to get to know parents and for parents to get to know her, she started a group called "Parent Partnership." Seven or eight parents attended the first meeting in January, 2018.

Initially they simply socialized, but later the talk turned to topics of interest and importance to everyone. From this group came one word: "inclusivity." Parent Partnership meetings continue, and their input has offered strong support of middle-school diversity initiatives.

At about the same time, HMS counselor Danielle McKelvey started a student group called "Diplomats for Diversity." The students jumped at the chance to create activities aimed at improving awareness of diversity and inclusion. They led parents through a "bead activity" called "How Diverse is your Universe," wherein participants could take a bead to represent each of the central people in their lives (friends, neighbors, coaches, doctors) as a visual way to reflect on their experiences with others. The students later ran the activity for staff, Peer Leaders and the entire sixth grade.

Because this activity has been so successful, McKelvey, Matozzo and Dr. Kristen Clark (math/science teacher and diversity coordinator) have applied to present "How Diverse is Your Universe" at the N.J. Department of Education Equity Forum this summer.

At the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, HMS introduced One Book, One School for all students and staff. They read "I Will Always Write Back," the true story of an American girl and a boy from Zimbabwe and the letter that changed both of their lives forever. Classroom discussions resulting from reading this book brought up questions such as, "What can you do to reach out to someone you don't know well, at recess, at lunch, in the neighborhood?"

In October of 2018, a small group – Matozzo, Clark, Dr. Karen Russo (assistant principal), Lindsay Kocher (phys. Ed.), Bob Bickel (phys. Ed.) and Jessica Miller (librarian) – designed a "bias workshop" and ran a pilot program with 180 students. They laid out scenarios of real events that have occurred in the past. Students examined the events and discussed what happened, what each student might do differently, how an individual can address negative behaviors and words and why bias is so destructive. The workshop will become part of summer orientation for incoming sixth-graders.

The Safety and School Climate team has added a monthly "advisory" – a 30-minute, mixed-grade-level class focusing on understanding harassment, intimidation, bullying, racism and other topics. The groups remain together through June, building trust and comfort with one another as they continue to address difficult subjects. Teachers who lead these advisories practice together at faculty meetings to share methods and ideas.

In February 2019, HMS celebrated Black History Month with a "read-in" supported by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). An enormous variety of adults including staff and community members visited classes to read stories, poems, speeches and books to students. Each week HMS held a Black History trivia contest.

March is Women's History Month. Teachers have been given access to a 96-page book of lesson plans created by the History Channel: "Herstory: Women in American History." Some of the women profiled were Anne Marbury Hutchinson, Sojourner Truth, Jeanette Rankin, Maria Tallchief and Sally Ride.

On March 14, high school Peer Leaders visited the middle school to meet with eighth-graders and to share their experiences with Anti-Defamation League training.

In April, HMS will celebrate Autism Awareness Month. Teachers will use advisory periods to show Ted Talks on the subject of autism and will lead discussions on inclusive understanding.

As the HMS community embraced planned activities, individual ideas produced additional outreach projects. One teacher, Diana Jermielty, made a connection while on vacation that led to a pen-pal relationship between an HMS pull-out Language Arts class and students in Poland. Both classes have shared news and information, and they exchanged school t-shirts.

"Our entire community has embraced these and other efforts to continue the discussion of diversity and inclusivity," said Matozzo. "I have been impressed by the level of engagement of faculty, families and students as we work together to create a climate and community inclusive of all individuals."

CHANGES to the HMS ACADEMIC STRUCTURE and SCHEDULE

Over the past two years, HMS administrators and teachers have explored ways to adjust and improve scheduling for the middle school. Beginning in September, a new way of learning will come to fruition in the form of a new, flexible, middle-school schedule.

Let's start by considering the concept of a "Bulldawg Block" period for each grade level versus the current "Tutorial" model. Currently, all students are scheduled for "Tutorial" during 8th period of every day, a class period originally designed as a time when students can ask for help or work on their homework. Chorus and Band also meet during Tutorial, which means our musical students are precluded from participating in Tutorial, limiting their ability to either receive intervention or assistance.

Under a new A-B schedule, the 47-minute Bulldawg Block will be held at different times of the day depending upon the grade level. Doing it this way will offer all students the opportunity to receive intervention on A-Days and enrichment such as Band and Chorus on B-Days. This opens many more possibilities to personalize each student's learning experience. Learning will be structured around student needs, interests and pacing, rather than around a single period in which all students are scheduled into a tutorial/study period.

An additional benefit of the A-B schedule design is that it will provide the staff flexibility to design enrichment experiences that will rotate every six weeks over feedback to students. For example, we are exploring the possibility of including Theatre Arts as an enrichment activity on B-Days. Research tells us that student voice and choice in learning are important for enrichment. This A-B schedule enables us to insert student voice into the school day.

Currently, our six-day cycle only offers students 30 class periods over 180 days in most of our exploratory courses. Beginning in the fall of 2019, students in grade 6 will receive 90 days of art instruction and 90 days of technology education. This offers students the opportunity to engage in instructional design that is student-centered as well as comprehensive.

There is a great deal of research to support this approach of building flexibility into the schedule each day, and we will continue to refine this approach over the next two years. The HMS team has researched and developed additional courses such as STEAM 1 (art focused: Illustration, Media and Film, Portfolio Design) and STEAM 2 (technology focused: Coding, Pre-Engineering, Design and Modeling). These courses will be built into the exploratory rotation for students. Our long-term goal will be to offer students in grade 8 the opportunity to make course selections in these fields as well. Digital Literacy standards will be adopted in full in our Tech 6 Courses and articulated through Tech 7, Tech 8 and all digital programs embedded and therefore reinforced daily.

To improve the HMS academic model, Writing Lab and Study Skills' standards will be embedded into each CORE course. The academic model wherein we teach study skills and writing in isolation as separate and distinct courses is outdated. Embedding the teaching of these skills into each class creates a more authentic and relevant experience and assures that the skills are learned and applied in context. Techniques of Writing will be added to the 8th grade sequence for all 8th graders next year.

Sample schedules for next year's middle-school students will be available by late spring to help parents to understand the change; likewise, staff are working to survey students, review data and determine what enrichment events/experiences best support our district's mission statement to nurture, empower and inspire. Parents are encouraged to review our 2019-20 HMS Program of Studies for course descriptions.

Considering our responsibility to better support social-emotional learning has been critical to the decision-making process surrounding the upcoming schedule changes. Subsequently, while planning changes to the academic day, the HMS team took a hard look at lunch and recess.

Currently, lunch and recess are combined into one 30-minute period that does not give students enough time to improve social skills, to collaborate, to decompress and to make interpersonal connections. Next year our middle school will have a full period lunch/ recess split: 30 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for recess.

We believe that that recess is an integral component of middle-level education. Likewise, practicing self-regulation, as well as cafeteria etiquette, is an important component of the lunch-recess relationship. As we learned through extensive research in this arena: "Recess promotes social and emotional learning and development for children by offering them a time to engage in peer interactions in which they practice and role play essential social skills," and, anecdotally, teachers have reported a reduction in discipline or behaviors that are distracting from class time. (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Recess Rules: Why the Undervalued Playtime May Be America's Best Investment for Healthy Kids and Healthy Schools. Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2007. Available at: www.rwjf.org/files/research/sports4kidsrecessreport.pdf.)

All of us at Haddonfield Middle School are excited about the new schedule, believing that these changes will help to relieve stress and anxiety felt by our students, improve flexibility in their learning experiences, assure equal access to enrichment classes and strengthen writing and study skills... all while maintaining our strong academic integrity.

HMHS CONSIDERS CHANGES TO THE ACADEMIC SCHEDULE

We nurture, we inspire, we empower ...

This is the heart of the new mission statement for the Haddonfield School District, created as part of the Long-Range Strategic Planning process. The board and administration are using these powerful words to examine everything we do, including the way our current schedule supports academic, social and emotional learning.

We nurture ... Social-Emotional Learning and Support

A typical high school schedule reflects "quantity" and rigidity more than "quality." Acting principal Tammy McHale and the Bell Committee have put much time and effort into examining the quality of the HMHS academic day, in particular how the schedule affects our students' mental and emotional health. Eight periods a day allows for little time to reflect, to socialize, to collaborate, to seek help with school work or with other issues. The committee is considering a significant change that may be in place for the fall of 2020.

A new schedule for us to teach and learn in the near future is still being carefully crafted, and one proposal would follow a six-day model of four days with seven 43-minute class periods followed by two days of longer blocks of time (80 minutes) with only three or four classes.

Every day will include a one-hour lunch period; not only does this provide additional time for social learning, but it offers another opportunity for students to collaborate or to connect with an adult. Finally, an advisory period would be built into the schedule (on the sixth day) so that students can seek help in order to process information more effectively. The schedule's design will intentionally consider the social-emotional elements of the school day, and will deliberately move away from the old model where students race through eight periods non-stop each day.

"The current schedule of eight periods has many transitions during the day causing stress for students and provides very little time for them to reflect, decompress or socialize," says McHale. "We mature and learn self-management through social learning, and the schedule needs to make room for that."

We inspire ... Cultural Competency

"We will inspire learners to advance their understanding of our interconnectedness ..." The mission statement identifies the essential nature of meaningful and respectful engagement with all kinds of people. To encourage this in our schools, we have made a commitment to address cultural competency regularly and intentionally. In recent district newsletters, you have read about myriad district-wide diversity initiatives. Members of the Bell Committee are considering a schedule with a longer lunch period and longer blocks of class time on certain days to allow for more and more varied social interactions. For example, the sixth day allows time for clubs and activities to meet during the day instead of prior to school. Giving our staff and students time to share experiences and to discover what connects us will help us to reach this goal.

We empower ... Contemporary Teaching and Learning

The third arm of the mission statement leads us to question whether an alternative educational practice highlights "challenge-based learning," where students are presented with a real-world problem and asked to work together to solve it. This progressive model is "learner-inspired, directed and owned," and the results indicate better engagement and more effective learning. The introduction of longer classes means that students can take more time to collaborate, to work on (real-life) problems thoughtfully, to increase active learning and to use various student-centered instructional strategies.

Teachers can vary their methods, expand the lesson outside the classroom and add elements which require more time than traditionally allowed. For instance, an English class may spend the shorter periods researching, reading and analyzing texts and then come together on the longer days for a Socratic seminar. This is a group discussion format where students help each other understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a text. With our high school moving to a full 1:1 Chromebook initiative by the start of the 2021-22 school year, leveraging technology in more student-centered ways is critical for student success in the tech laden world our students will enter after high school.

What are the next steps?

"As we move forward in this process, we are adding parents and students to a committee that currently includes teachers, counselors and administrators," said McHale. "We will meet monthly to brainstorm ideas, explore options and create mock schedules. The goal is to create our own unique schedule that will optimize students' academic and social-emotional learning."

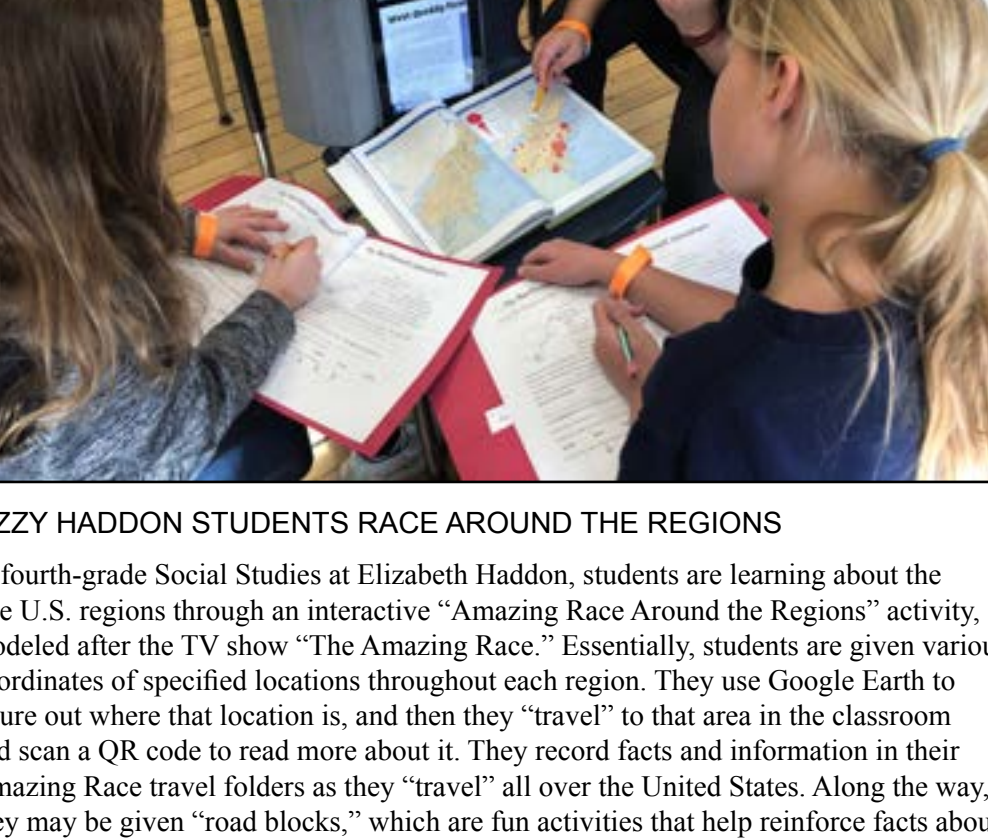
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SCHOOL NEWS



CENTRAL STUDENTS CREATE ILLUSTRATIONS

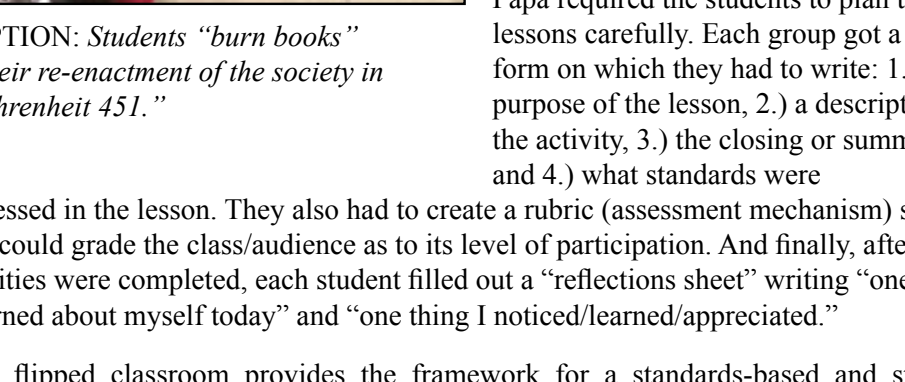
Illustrator E.B. Lewis visited all three elementary schools, showing them his work and talking about how he creates his lifelike paintings. Jennifer Gallogly's first-graders (as well as other classes) used a photo of Hopkins Pond to make their own watercolors, now on display in the library.



LIZZY HADDON STUDENTS RACE AROUND THE REGIONS

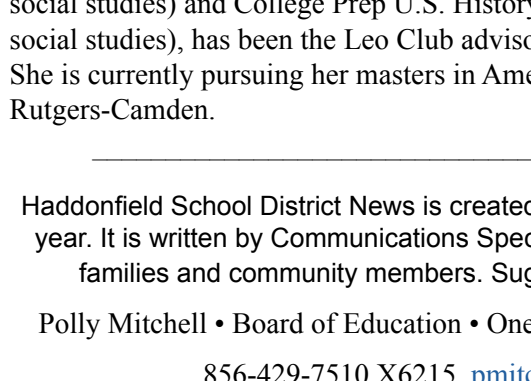
In fourth-grade Social Studies at Elizabeth Haddon, students are learning about the five U.S. regions through an interactive "Amazing Race Around the Regions" activity, modeled after the TV show "The Amazing Race." Essentially, students are given various coordinates of specified locations throughout each region. They use Google Earth to figure out where that location is, and then they "travel" to that area in the classroom and scan a QR code to read more about it. They record facts and information in their Amazing Race travel folders as they "travel" all over the United States. Along the way, they may be given "road blocks," which are fun activities that help reinforce facts about each location. For example, students had to form an assembly line to mass produce Hershey Kisses when they visited Hershey, Pennsylvania. They were given Hershey Kisses, a piece of foil, scissors, and had to wrap as many chocolates as they could in one minute. When students have completed each leg of the race, they may explore the region further using Google Expeditions/Google Cardboard – a type of virtual reality glasses that "transport" them to that area.

CAPTION: Students record information about a specific place in the Northeast region (West Quoddy Head, Maine) in their folders.



TATEM'S FIRST-GRADE ADVENTURE AQUARIUM TRIP

On March 8, the first-grade students at Tatem had so much fun exploring the aquarium with their friends and family. Before the trip, the students completed an ocean animal research project in which they read articles and readers about particular ocean animals that interested them. They explored and learned all about the different zones of the ocean and used Google Expedition to study animal life that lives in each zone. Tatem's first-graders are most certainly ocean experts now! Parents and the community will be able to see all their work at the Open House on April 4th.



EIGHTH-GRADERS ROCK A FLIPPED CLASSROOM

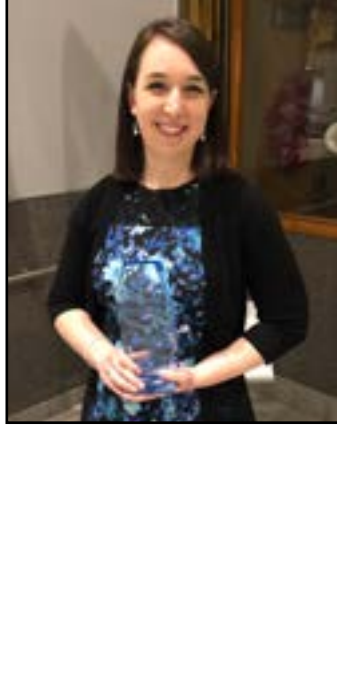
Tina Papa's accelerated ELA classes were reading "Fahrenheit 451" when one student asked, "What if we could live for one day in their society?" After thoughtful discussion, Papa offered her students the opportunity to be responsible for all facets of their presentations and assessment. Forming groups of 3-5, the students first examined ELA state standards to decide which standards their lesson or activity would answer. Then they created a skit, activity or presentation. Skits included firefighters searching for books to burn and students acting out the school day as portrayed in the book.

Papa required the students to plan their lessons carefully. Each group got a form on which they had to write: 1.) the purpose of the lesson, 2.) a description of the activity, 3.) the closing or summary and 4.) what standards were addressed in the lesson. They also had to create a rubric (assessment mechanism) so that they could grade the class/audience as to its level of participation. And finally, after all activities were completed, each student filled out a "reflections sheet" writing "one thing I learned about myself today" and "one thing I noticed/learned/appreciated."

"The flipped classroom provides the framework for a standards-based and student-centered assessment, meaningful and engaging presentations, and a wonderful opportunity for student collaboration," said Tracy Matozzo, HMS principal. "This model is a 21st-Century practice that allows students to take ownership of their learning."

HMHS TEACHER HONORED for FUND RAISING

Social Studies teacher Maggie Gammie received the Adam Taliaferro Foundation's Dr. Harry Gamble Award during the ATF Gala on March 8. This award recognized her role as advisor to the HMHS Leo Club and for efforts in raising funds for patients with spinal cord injuries. ATF is named for Adam Taliaferro who was paralyzed while playing football for Penn State in 2000. Student groups that support ATF often raise money through a football-related activity. The Leo Club's major fund-raiser is the annual Powder-Puff flag football game, played each year at the start of Spirit Week. To raise money, Leo Club students charge admission and sell concessions. Gammie, who teaches Global Issues (freshman social studies) and College Prep U.S. History I (sophomore social studies), has been the Leo Club advisor for three years. She is currently pursuing her masters in American History at Rutgers-Camden.



Haddonfield School District News is created and shared monthly throughout the school year. It is written by Communications Specialist Polly Mitchell and distributed to staff, families and community members. Suggestions and comments are welcome.

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