



HADDONFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

... news from the Board of Education

FROM the SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings!

Members of the Haddonfield Board of Education continually strive to make good decisions and support district initiatives. At this mid-year point, we report on progress in several areas that affect the future of our schools and that inform our school families, staff and friends.



Please enjoy what follows. There is a lot of helpful information, and, near the end, five brief stories from our classrooms.

I encourage you to reach out to the district's communications specialist, [Polly Mitchell](#), with suggestions and comments. And, as always, I'd love to hear from you as well.

- Larry Mussoline, Ph.D.

BOARD NEWS

WELCOME NEWEST MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Because of the departure of Mary Fagan, the Board of Education had a recent opening. The announcement was made public in late December, and applications were solicited through January 7, 2019. Four candidates were interviewed by the board at the work session on January 17. The board was looking for candidates who

- understand the level of commitment of time and effort required;
- possess skills which would align with our current needs;
- understand the role of a school board member;
- show community volunteer experience;
- can work collaboratively;
- have a desire to help in all areas;
- have an understanding of Haddonfield culture and traditions.

Choosing among a group of four talented applicants was a challenge. However, at the board meeting on Thursday, January 24, **the board voted to appoint Jaime Grookett** as the newest member of the BOE. She will serve on the curriculum committee for the 2019 calendar year. If Jamie so chooses, she may run for the open board seat in the November 2019 election.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The district is engaged in a strategic planning process that will culminate in April with specific, high leverage, district-wide goals on which we will focus over the next three years. The first phase of the process began in October with interviews, small group forums and a parent/community forum. During January, all community members, parents of children in the schools, staff and grades 4-12 pupils had the opportunity to weigh in on district strengths and needs via electronic surveys. In early February, a core district planning group will review all input and work toward the development of multi-year district goals. Once the goals are Board-approved, educators and specialists from across the district will develop very specific action plans to guide at least the first 18 months of focused effort on each goal. This community-based exercise should strategically focus district leaders propelling us into the future. **Look for great work to unfold as the district organizes around key goals to support our students' learning growth and wellness!**

HSD PARTICIPATES IN NJQSAC FOR FIRST TIME IN 10 YEARS

Residents of Haddonfield will be reading a lot about QSAC over the next several months. Here are the facts about this process, the background of the 10-year hiatus, and what residents, school staff and families should know.

New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC), usually referred to as QSAC, is a monitoring process for all schools in the state to ensure that students are provided a fair and quality education. It is overseen by the state Department of Education (DOE) and reviewed every three years by the county DOE.

The state DOE operates with a "common vision" that all students should have access to a high quality education, and that this can be achieved when students:

- have the opportunity to thrive and
- develop the skills and knowledge needed to successful pathway decisions after high school.

QSAC is a tool provided by the NJDOE to assist schools in achieving that vision by providing clarity, alignment, and simplicity in federal and state oversight.

THE QSAC PROCESS:

The school district completes a self-assessment, the District Performance Review (DPR), that measures strengths and weaknesses in five areas of school district effectiveness:

1. Instruction and Program
2. Fiscal Management
3. Governance
4. Operations
5. Personnel

The DPR uses weighted quality performance indicators. County officials review and verify the district's self-assessment and calculate the score. Based on a 100-point scale, the district must score 80 points in each of the five areas to be recommended as a high-performing district. If a district scores below 80 in any area, the result will be a designation of "interim status" and will require a District Improvement Plan (DIP).

This is the first time Haddonfield School District has been involved in the process since the 2009 school year because outstanding student test results made us exempt for the past three cycles. Because elements of the QSAC process shift each cycle, we face some challenges in meeting new expectations.

Re-experiencing QSAC for the first time in a decade has certainly given the District pause to exam our practices and procedures. As we identify areas in need of growth and those not aligned with state requirements, we know there will be a great deal of work ahead of us.

With this knowledge, the District sees this as an opportunity to take a deep and hard look at current flaws and give us a starting place to improve our operations and governance, update our curriculum and upgrade in areas of technology and facilities.

UPDATE ON THE DISTRICT'S SCHOOL SAFETY COMMITTEE

Under the guidance of Sandra Horwitz, District Safety Coordinator, a joint Community and District Safety Committee was formed and has met three times this school year. Currently, there are 33 members who were invited to join from school and township constituencies: parents (some of whom are school administrators in other districts), teachers, Haddonfield school administrators, school district nurses, police and fire personnel, emergency management personnel, borough administrators, Board of Education (BOE) members and local school security experts. With the aid of publications from the State of New Jersey and various national Safety Commissions, the committee identified best practices for school safety and compared our security needs to them. Once our needs were identified, they were prioritized and will be cost-estimated by our architect of record and shared with the BOE. As with most school districts, funding to implement safety initiatives is a challenge, but we are committed to continually improving our school security. Until funding is secured, the district is working on implementing improvements that require little or no cost. The committee will meet again in March to learn about the programs that each school has implemented this year to improve the climate and culture within their walls – the foundation that supports any safe school initiative. In April, a subcommittee will meet to get an update on progress and funding possibilities from district leaders. This committee has created very positive discourse with key community stakeholders and has resulted in meaningful progress toward continually improving school safety.

DISTRICT DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Haddonfield School District has always endeavored to be a safe and welcoming environment, but since September, we have made a much more concentrated and intentional effort to embrace diversity and to foster global competence. "Global competence" is the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to thrive in a diverse, interconnected world.

The framework we are working on for global competence all coalesce around key concepts of empathy, valuing multiple perspectives, appreciating diversity, critical thinking, problem-solving, an understanding of global conditions, events, interconnectedness and cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

The process began in the spring of 2018 when all high school students took a survey on the topics of school climate, diversity and acceptance. Results were used to gather data and drive future initiatives.

During the summer of 2018, Board President Sangillo, Dr. Mussoline and Assistant Superintendent Klaus met with Dr. Shelley Zion from the Center for Access, Success and Equity (CASE) at Rowan University, individuals from the University of Pennsylvania's Excellence and Equity Consortia and its Racial Empowerment Collaborative to determine which group would best serve all five of our schools during the 2018-19 school year. The group we contracted with was Dr. Zion's CASE group.

At various times during 2018, high school administrators met with representatives of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), the ADL (Anti-Defamation League), the Office of Student Conduct at the University of Pennsylvania and CASE. In the spring of 2018, the NAACP made a presentation to the high school staff, and in the fall Dr. Zion made presentations to the entire district staff.

Also during the summer of 2018, a team of district leaders attended the Temple University Equity Institute on the topic of building district capacity to stop racial harassment and bullying.

In collaboration with these outside organizations, all five schools began to design their global competency initiatives. *What follows is a general summary of district-wide plans. In the February newsletter, we will describe diversity initiatives in detail for the high school, followed by the middle school and finally the elementary schools.*

All five of our schools have participated in class lessons, activities and community events that were organized to celebrate different ethnic, gender, religious and other groups. Student groups formed to encourage free exchange of ideas, and older students attended ADL workshops. High school students shared what they learned with the middle school community.

Faculty were trained in recognizing privilege, bias and microaggressions and devised strategies for creating an inclusive classroom. As part of professional development days, teachers watched and discussed a video called "American Promise." Staff have shared professional articles on culturally responsive teaching and purchased books for their classrooms that represent more diverse subjects.

On February 20, all three elementary principals will host a presentation of the animated Disney movie "Zootopia" at 6:00 p.m. in the Middle School auditorium. This movie screening will be followed by discussion for parents and students dealing with the subjects of stereotypes, prejudice and change.

School administrators formed a book club to read and discuss "Privilege, Power and Difference" (Johnson) and attended a diversity-in-hiring workshop.

Some families have joined in the diversity initiatives by making presentations to various classes about their own family's diversity. Elementary parents formed a group called Community Partners for Equitable and Inclusive Education and meet monthly to discuss topics and ideas.

High school classes now include "Race, Class and Gender," "Women's Literature" and "The Holocaust." The elementary schools continue to teach an immigration unit in fourth grade.

NEXT MONTH: *more details about Diversity Initiatives at HMHS.*

LONG-RANGE FACILITIES PLAN

On March 8, 2016, a bond referendum was presented to Haddonfield voters to repair and improve the Haddonfield School District's school buildings. The referendum asked for approval to sell bonds to generate about \$35 million for this work. About 40 percent of registered voters came to the polls that day, and a decisive majority voted "YES."

For two years, members of the community have watched work proceed at every building in the district. Critical masonry repairs have been performed, roofs replaced, new windows installed, classrooms air-conditioned, and many other vital infrastructure upgrades completed to ensure our buildings will continue to provide a safe environment for years to come. In the upcoming weeks, our high school students will be able to return to the reconstructed B-wing to enjoy the new cafeteria and outdoor eating area. We also look forward to welcoming the community to celebrate and tour the completed project in the near future.

As the last construction vehicles depart, you may be wondering, "What's next?"

Since referendum planning focused on the most critical infrastructure repair and restoration, the Board of Education will be working to update its Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) to address facilities upgrades needed to support our curriculum and student achievement, school safety improvements, and remaining infrastructure needs. "The world is changing rapidly, and our schools must approach education with greater flexibility, more purposeful technology usage and a wider range of teaching styles," Dr. Mussoline says. "We must prepare our students for jobs that don't yet exist. K12 educational systems have to answer that bell."

In a presentation last fall, board member Susan Kutner identified a process that will gather information from all constituent groups including staff, community members, students, and outside experts. ([The LRFP introduction presentation can be found on the district's website.](#)) The planning process will consider enrollment projections, current and future programs and curriculum delivery objectives, and the findings of the District Strategic Plan and special education audit in order to provide a comprehensive picture of facilities needs and broad range of remediation options. The study will also identify capital maintenance upgrades that will require attention in the future.

The community is extraordinarily fortunate to have someone like Susan Kutner leading the facilities planning process. A professional with decades of experience as an architect and educational facilities planner, Kutner joined the Haddonfield Board of Education in March 2015. As the former director of educational facilities planning of two large architectural firms, she worked with hundreds of school districts to devise and implement the most responsive and cost-effective plans for their communities. Currently she is employed as the Director of the Office of School Facilities Planning for the New Jersey Department of Education and is a state member of the National Council for School Facilities.

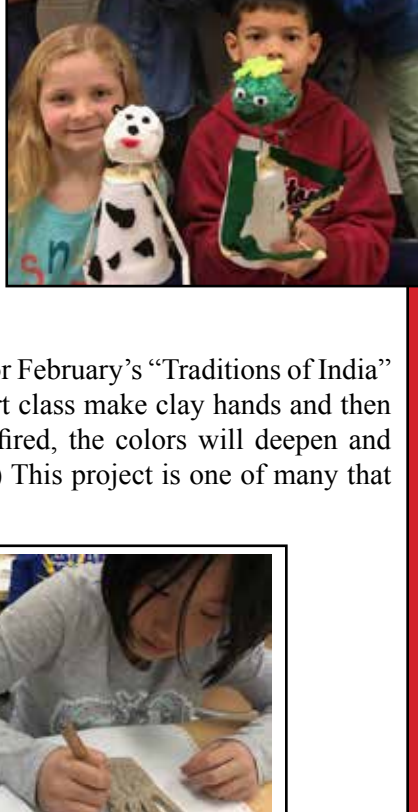
The depth of the LRFP and amount of information sharing and feedback needed for a successful effort will take considerable time. Therefore, the LRFP is expected to be finalized in Spring 2020. Several intermediate presentations will be provided at board meetings as information is developed and options considered. Look for continual news in the monthly district newsletter.

Look for continual news in the monthly district newsletter.

SCHOOL NEWS

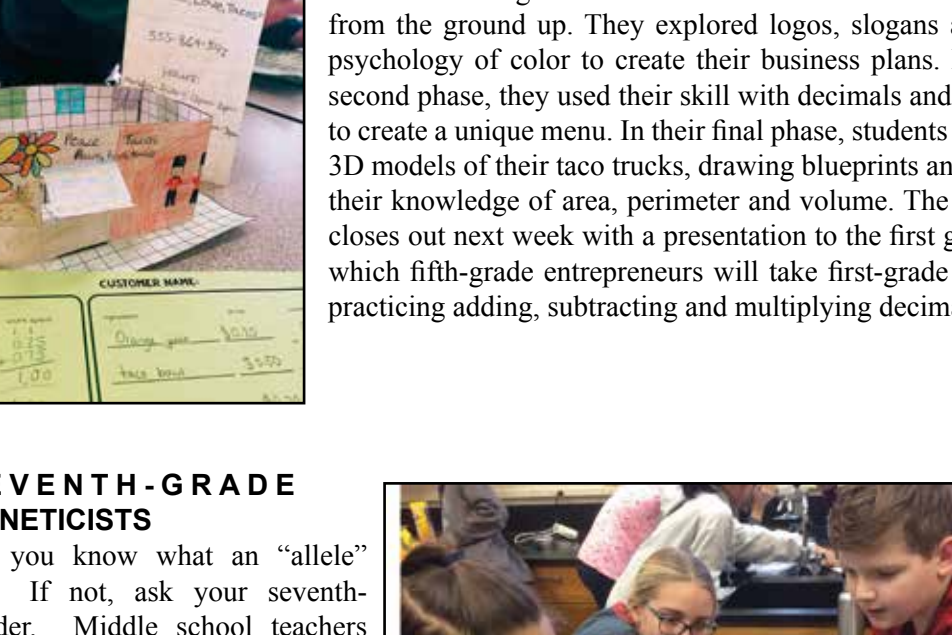
CENTRAL FOURTH-GRADERS BUILD PUPPETS

Claire Ruskoski teaches art in Tatem and Central Elementary. Recently, she and her fourth-graders have been learning about Jim Henson, creator of many of the Sesame Street puppets so familiar to us. Ruskoski thought it was important for her students to know that art is more than drawing and that Henson was motivated by a desire to make people smile. First designing and then building the puppets, the students explored engineering issues (the puppets had to be structurally strong) as well as exaggerated character traits. Some of the materials used were Styrofoam, fabric, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, wooden skewers and glue.



THIRD GRADE EXPLORES MEHNDI PATTERNS

At Elizabeth Haddon School, students and teachers prepare for February's "Traditions of India" assembly. In these photos, third-graders in Ms. Kimmell's art class make clay hands and then decorate using Mehndi patterns and colorful glazes. Once fired, the colors will deepen and acquire a glossy finish. (Thank you to the PTA for our kiln!) This project is one of many that are part of the district's diversity initiatives.



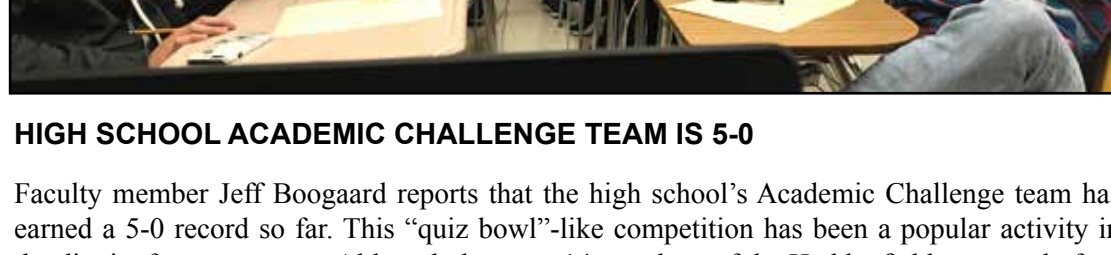
SEVENTH - GRADE GENETICISTS

Do you know what an "allele" is? If not, ask your seventh-grader. Middle school teachers Amanda Leighton and Robin Walters are leading a genetics unit called BioEYES with help from experts from the University of Pennsylvania. This program uses Zebrafish eggs and larvae to teach the students about heredity. Using the scientific method, students design an experiment, formulate a hypothesis, collect data and draw conclusions.



PLACE YOUR TACO ORDERS HERE

Tatem fifth-grade teacher Emily MacGregor and her students had fun creating taco truck businesses. Students worked from the ground up. They explored logos, slogans and the psychology of color to create their business plans. For the second phase, they used their skill with decimals and money to create a unique menu. In their final phase, students created 3D models of their taco trucks, drawing blueprints and using their knowledge of area, perimeter and volume. The project closes out next week with a presentation to the first grade in which fifth-grade entrepreneurs will take first-grade orders, practicing adding, subtracting and multiplying decimals.



HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC CHALLENGE TEAM IS 5-0

Faculty member Jeff Boogaard reports that the high school's Academic Challenge team has earned a 5-0 record so far. This "quiz bowl"-like competition has been a popular activity in the district for many years. Although there are 14 members of the Haddonfield team, only four students compete at a time, going up against nine other school districts in south Jersey. Questions cover all academic subjects and current events. As of today, the team has four matches left and then a final tournament. GO DAWGS!

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.

Polly Mitchell • Board of Education • One Lincoln Avenue • Haddonfield, NJ 08033
856-429-7510 X6215 pmitchell@haddonfield.k12.nj.us