



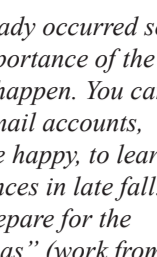
HADDONFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

... news from the Board of Education

FROM the SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Haddonfield Families:

It's great to have everyone back to school. All of us are excited to have your children with us. I'm very happy to report the school year is off to a great start. Our principals and teachers did such an outstanding job getting ready for the new school year that when it finally came, it was as smooth as silk. Back in the saddle. It was a lot of fun for us and hopefully for your children. I can't believe we're now heading into the fall and all the fun, cooler activities surrounding that time of year.



By the time you receive this, most if not all of the "back-to-school nights" have already occurred so you have had an opportunity to meet your child's teacher. We all know about the importance of the parent-teacher relationship. Those relationships are built over time; they just don't happen. You can communicate with our teachers any time you wish to do so. Everyone has district email accounts, and everyone in our school system wants exactly what you want, for your child to be happy, to learn, and to grow each year. In fact, now's the time to begin preparing for parent conferences in late fall. **Here's an idea:** create a portfolio of your child's work starting today in order to prepare for the conference later in the year. Create and label four folders. Label one "Learning Areas" (work from all the subjects), another "Testing and Assessments," another "Notes from Teacher(s) and Others," and the last "Thoughts, Ideas and Questions" you may have for the teacher when you meet. Positive parent-school communication benefits everyone.

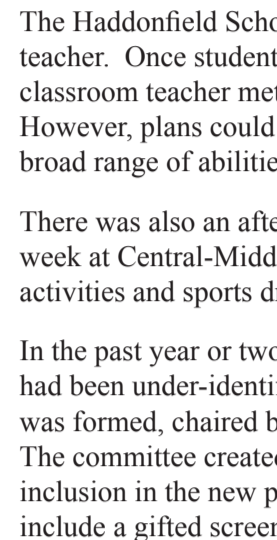
Don't forget we are off from school on September 30 and October 9 for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur respectively. Speaking about the school schedule, if you haven't had a chance to see next year's (2020-21) school calendar you may want to get a look at it on our website. Since Labor Day falls on September 7th next year, we typically begin the school year prior to Labor Day then take a four-day Labor Day break. We also eliminated two of the half-days at the start of the next school year. That equates to beginning school with a half day for students on September 1 and 2 and a full day on Thursday, September 3rd. Other than that, the calendar is pretty much the same as it has been over the past few years.

Best wishes for a smooth end of September and a beautiful fall for everyone.

Larry Mussoline, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

DISTRICT NEWS



WELCOME DEB LANDRY, our Elementary Gifted and Talented Teacher! Get to know her and goals for the program.

Deb Landry accepted the role of elementary Gifted and Talented (G&T) teacher, a new position in the Haddonfield School District. She has been a fourth-grade teacher at Elizabeth Haddon for 12 years, and previously taught first grade for five years elsewhere.

Landry has had a very interesting journey. Her bachelor's degree was in finance, and she originally held jobs in print production and publishing. She has also lived in many different places including five years in the Marshall Islands when her husband's job took the family there.

When her daughters were ready to start school, Landry researched preschools, not having any idea there were so many philosophies of teaching. This piqued her interest, and she chose to learn more about education. When her husband's job brought them to South Jersey, and she knew they'd be staying put, she went back to school, turning the avocation into a vocation by earning a master's degree in Elementary Education.

"When I was young, I actually wanted to be an anthropologist," she said. "When I look back now, I see that all of my interests and activities related to my love of learning, and I guess becoming a teacher was the next step."

The Haddonfield School District has had a G&T program in the past, but no dedicated teacher. Once students were identified through testing, the parents, the principal and the classroom teacher met to agree on a plan which the classroom teacher would implement. However, plans could be difficult to execute in a classroom with many students with a broad range of abilities.

There was also an after-school G&T program for students in grades 3 to 5 held once a week at Central-Middle School. Attendance was a problem because other after-school activities and sports drew students' attention, and transportation was not provided.

In the past year or two, the Board of Education and district administrators realized we had been under-identifying G&T students based on the national average. A committee was formed, chaired by Elizabeth Haddon principal Gerry Bissinger in the fall of 2018. The committee created a plan, and parents were invited to nominate their students for inclusion in the new program. Students were identified using "multiple measures" that include a gifted screening test, standardized test scores, a teacher rubric and scores on local assessments. In the end, approximately 100 first- through fifth-graders were identified.

In terms of a definition, the committee agreed with the University of Connecticut philosophy that "there is no such thing as a 'gifted' student," only students with gifted behaviors. That is, those who can be identified as having a confluence of three behaviors: achievement, creativity and focus on task. Students identified one year may not be identified in the next, and vice versa.

Landry's task this year is to build a program based on the curriculum the district already has, enriching and expanding that curriculum. The district is considering the purchase of a special vocabulary program, but Landry will work with the Lucy Calkins Units of Study for reading and writing. For math, she'll enrich our current math curriculum and take advantage of materials from higher grade levels.

On a day-to-day basis, Landry will not pull her students out of class to pursue different activities and topics; rather she will "push in." For example, if one classroom has a group of five students gifted in math, Landry will go into that classroom and augment the whole-class lesson for her small group. Working closely with each classroom teacher and his/her teaching style, Landry will be extremely flexible in how she works with these small groups, exposing all of our teachers and students to more rigorous examples of learning.

Flexibility is a key word. One class might have three students gifted in math and two students gifted in language, one teacher may ask Landry to work with students in the hallway and another teacher may ask her to remain in the room. Each student's needs are different, each teacher's style is different, and Landry will work to accommodate all of these individual factors.

"Of course I will meet with parents at the start of the year, and we'll create a Learning Plan," she says. "Differentiating for each child is essential."

Our three elementary schools follow a six-day pattern. Landry will work two days in each school. On day 1, she will have "an instructional day." Day 2 will be "an enrichment day." On an instructional day, Landry will expand the curriculum, and on the enrichment day, students will work on a project. Students have a lot of say about their projects; if the student has been identified as gifted in math, but he/she loves to write, the project can be a written one.

Landry will actively encourage student "agency," giving her students voice and choice in how and what they learn. This is the cornerstone of any gifted program.

In short, the goals of the new G&T program are to provide individualized support for the students, to meet them at the intersection of their abilities and interests, and to offer them challenging and enriching experiences, under Landry's expert guidance.

"Because my family moved so often, my life has taken a course with frequent change built-in," she says. "Also, I am a lifelong learner and have always looked for new challenges. Several years ago, I got that 'seven-year itch' and went back to school for my Ed.S. certification. That was enough to keep me challenged for a few years, but I have been looking for a way to use what I learned in that program, and the G&T position seems perfect."

Changes to our Special Ed. Programs and Practices Resulting from Last Year's Special Ed. Audit

At the request of the Haddonfield School District, the Chester County Intermediate Unit completed a systemic review of our special education program last year. The audit was completed and presented to the Board of Education (BOE) in February 2019 and generated 45 recommendations. In August, Dr. Gino Priolo, the Director of Special Education, presented a summary of the recommendations to the BOE.

In fewer than 6 months:

- 64% (29) of recommendations have been completed
- 33% (15) of recommendations are in process
- 2% (1) of recommendations have not yet been addressed

Here are changes the district and the Child Study Team (CST) have already made.

- The BOE added a position to the CST, hiring School Psychologist Alice Lee, bringing the average caseload per staff person under 60 students. (In the past, the typical caseload was about 69 students.) Lee earned her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Villanova University. She went on to further her education at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), earning her master of science degree in School Psychology with a specialization in Applied Behavioral Analysis; she later earned her Educational Specialist certification in School Psychology from PCOM. While we are excited to have Alice as a part of our team, we are equally excited to reduce the caseload of our overall Child Study Team by almost 14%, enabling us to better focus on student needs.
- Enhanced pre-referral training is being coordinated to provide Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) building-based teams with specific concepts, tools, techniques and practices in assessing and addressing students' learning, behavior and health difficulties, consistent with the New Jersey Department of Education's Tiered System of Supports.
- To help support and maximize parent participation in Child Study Team meetings, and to help improve the efficiency of the meetings (particularly annual reviews), a parent training entitled, "How to Maximize Parent and Student Preparation and Participation in Annual Review Meetings" was developed and implemented. Additionally, portions of the IEP were shared with parents prior to the meeting to help better inform families and reduce the time taken to review certain sections of the document at the meeting.
- A related services team member (Speech-Language Therapist) was added to the district's Local Professional Development Committee to help ensure the continued professional support for specialized CST faculty.
- Additional formal collaborative time, up to twice monthly, for CST Case Managers has been built into the schedule.
- An observation tool was developed to provide both general and special education co-teachers with formative feedback based upon 22 core competencies of co-teaching. In addition to the required teacher observation, administrators will engage in a collaborative observation of co-teaching teams to provide formative feedback and guidance to improve and refine pedagogy, with a particular focus on maximizing student engagement.



Meet Melissa Young, the Class III Officer at Haddonfield Memorial High School

One of the first new faces visitors will see at Haddonfield Memorial High School (HMHS) this year is Melissa Young, the school's new Class III Officer.

Her hiring fulfills one of the district's Safety Committee initiatives, and she has been in place and on duty since the first day of school. Recently, the State of New Jersey has authorized all school districts to employ Class III Officers to provide security on campuses. Class III officers have the same powers as borough police officers, except in our case the Class III officer at HMHS is a part-time employee of the Borough Police Department whose salary is paid by the school district. Officer Young will serve as our first line of protection at HMHS while serving as a helpful resource for our students and staff.

An alumna of Rutgers-Camden, Young has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in liberal studies, but she received police training at the Middlesex County Police Academy. She began her career as an officer at Rutgers-New Brunswick and Rutgers-Camden, then advanced to the Camden County prosecutor's office. She was a plain-clothes detective for 20 years, serving units such as child abuse and domestic violence. Retiring in 2018, she had been looking for a new job.

"I come from a culture of service," Young said. "My husband and brother-in-law are firemen, and my sister is a nurse. I was looking for a way to continue to make a positive contribution to a community or organization."

"I am very happy to be here," she added. "The students, staff and parents have been friendly and welcoming. This is a great school community!"

(During this interview, and as if on cue, a parent walked past Young and called out, "Thank you for keeping our children safe!")

"It is also refreshing to work in such a positive environment," she said. "I spent many years working with victims and perpetrators of abuse and violence, and I experienced my share of tough days."

Young lives in Haddon Township with her husband and two children. Welcome!

SCHOOL NEWS

MEET OUR NEW STAFF!

[Central Elementary](#)

[Elizabeth Haddon Elementary](#)

[Tatem Elementary](#)

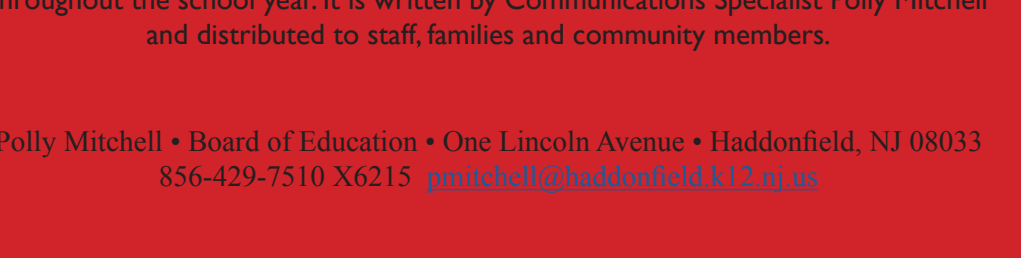
[Haddonfield Middle School](#)

[Haddonfield Memorial High School](#)



"Get to Know Me" at Central School

During the first week of school, third-grade students at Central took part in a project designed to get to know each other. They created signs for their lockers that asked "Who Am I?" Listing a favorite book, hobby, pet and plans for future careers, these signs allowed classmates to learn about each other in a fun way. Because the signs don't reveal the answer, teachers, friends and even family tried to guess who was being described on each locker. Finally, each student drew a self-portrait.



Did You Have the First-Day Jitters?

Lizzy Haddon second-graders in Lisa Murphy's class eased into the new school year by reading "The First-Day Jitters" (Danneberg). "The children made a text-to-self connection by responding to the writing prompt: 'I had the first-day jitters because ...' or 'I did not have the first-day jitters because ...'"

Getting to Know Each Other at Tatem

In Jen Harding's class, students worked together to build index card towers without using scissors, tape or glue. As they collaborated to build the tallest tower, they also had to write something on each card that the students had in common. Excellent teamwork!

Middle Schoolers "Sorted Out" for the Start of School

During the first week of school, Ms. McComas's sixth-graders put on the Hogwarts' sorting hat to find out which of four "houses" they represent. Throughout the school day, students sit with their housemates and have the opportunity to earn or surrender house points. The students love the Harry Potter allusion and have enthusiastically joined in the fun. CAPTION: Principal Tracy Ann Matozzo posed with her fellow Slytherin house team.

Water Ice Wednesday: A Start-of-School Year Tradition

On the first full-day Wednesday of the academic year, HMHS students enjoyed a tradition that brings students together in a relaxed and fun way. After dismissal, they make their way to the front campus where Student Council members are ready to scoop out water ice for all. One of many Student Council-sponsored activities aimed at bringing the community together, Water-Ice Wednesday produced miles of smiles!

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

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