



“Pride in Performance”

## **EAST WINDSOR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Richard Katz, Ed. D.  
Superintendent

September 6, 2017

EWRSD Educational Community,

Welcome back to the start of another school year. I hope that everyone had a wonderful summer. Thanks to the hard work of many, our schools are fully prepared to welcome back our faculty, staff, and of course, our students.

On the final day of school last year, I sent the following message to our community:

*As we have said before, the last two years have seen the implementation of many new pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade initiatives. Each one of these served an important purpose and has improved what we offer to students. Moving forward, we must be careful not to merely pile one new initiative on top of another where they become unmanageable and less impactful than intended. Therefore, our intention in the coming year is to advance through refinement of programs and activities, and to make sure that what we do, we do with great effectiveness and consistency. This mindset is not to be interpreted as advocacy for status quo, but instead that we will look to make improvements and continue the momentum by building on what we've started.*

With this in mind, we have established priorities for the coming year which are focused on continuing down the same path and making it all work. While it's one thing to compile a long list of initiatives and projects that look great on paper, it's another thing to make sure they are effective, meaningful, and truly having an impact on students. Making it work, making it matter... that's our focus now.

With the concept of "making it all work" driving the year, our priorities are summarized as follows:

1. Expand and enhance academic opportunities and rigor for all students, by:
  - a. Personalizing learning for each student through:
    - i. Strengthened individual teacher and school Data Teams use of summative and formative academic assessments, as well as social and emotional student data.
    - ii. Increased effectiveness of questioning and feedback to students based on what we know about them.
    - iii. More consistently engaging every student into each lesson.
  - b. Cultivating a professional development plan that stresses the art of teaching instead of concentrating on programs, and supports knowledge of instructional strategies and best practices.

- c. Leveraging the use of technology to improve teaching and learning, through continued planning and implementation of the Model Classrooms/Classrooms of the Future.
2. Ensure that all students graduate high school with the necessary skills and appropriate plan to continue to post-secondary options.
3. Support foundational literacy skills of all students, with concentration on the achievement gap of current/former ELL and Special Education students.
4. Address the needs of the whole child by ensuring that all students feel healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, with opportunities for social/emotional learning and growth.
5. Bolster training and support for teachers who are new to a grade level, content area, or employed as a leave replacement.
6. Successfully complete the planning process for the elementary school reconfiguration beginning September 2018.

We are all excited to see it come together even more in the 2017-18 school year. And we are committed to taking everything we have put in place to the next level, and making it all work!

### **State Aid, Tax Relief, and Allocations**

On Friday July 14, we were notified that the NJ State budget appropriated an additional \$1,447,819 in aid to EWRSD for the 2017-18 school year.

The additional funds were allocated as listed below:

1. Tax Relief  
This allocation reduced the original 2017-18 budget tax levy increase by 20%. \$250,000 or 17% of the additional aid was returned to the community through tax relief.
2. Prepare for a 1:1 High School Student Chromebook Initiative  
Over the past several years, we have made a significant investment into deploying Chromebook carts across all schools and grade levels. We have also conducted a large amount of training on their use and the use of Google Classroom, Apps, and Extensions in the delivery of curriculum. Yet, we still have classrooms and content areas where teachers are void of Chromebook carts or required to share them with others. Therefore, those teachers are not able to plan accordingly in order to make the best use of the technologies, and students do not get the full experience or level of learning opportunities. By providing each student in grades 9-12 with their own device, we will be eliminating those barriers and teachers will be able to plan lessons and design assignments knowing that each student will always have a device. Further, with almost 40% of our students qualifying free/reduced lunch, these devices will ensure equitable access for every high school student.

With this new purchase and distribution in the high school, the current high school devices can be reallocated to the elementary and middle schools to fill gaps where there are currently no or only shared Chromebooks available.

The implementation will not be immediate as there are many plans that need to be made and we did not anticipate the funds would be available until we received the additional aid. We hope to possibly pilot the 1:1 in the spring of this school year with full implementation in September 2018.

3. High School TV Studio Upgrade

This was an item originally budgeted for the 2016-17 school year but was not ultimately completed. The studio currently has outdated equipment and a more current setup would enable us to expand capabilities in current courses and potentially create new course offerings.

4. 4 Bilingual/ESL Teachers (1 Elementary, 1 MS, 2 HS)

These positions are necessary to meet newly released State class size maximums for Bilingual classrooms. The requirements were announced after our original budget development was complete. These positions will alleviate those class sizes.

5. Continuation of Training for BSI Teachers to Earn ESL Certifications

Our population of English Language Learner students continues to grow. In fact, approximately 50% of all newly enrolled students over the last year speak a language other than English at home. While not all of them require ELL programs, it is an indication of the increasing necessity for us to be prepared to address our students' needs and to our commitment of serving Every Child, Every Day.

As a result, last school year we formed a partnership with Rowan University, which resulted in the creation of a cohort program where participating EWRSD teachers will receive their ESL certificates. Provided funding was available, our goal was to continue this effort and extend the opportunity to more teachers across the district. This allocation will allow us to increase the number of certified ESL teachers in the district, something we very much need moving forward, and expand the repertoires of our existing educators.

**EWRSD Board of Education Vacancy**

Due to the resignation of Board member Kennedy Paul, an EAST WINDSOR representative, there is a vacancy on the Board of Education of the East Windsor Regional School District. Letters of interest should be delivered to Paul M. Todd, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and must be received no later than end of business on Friday, September 22, 2017. The Board will interview interested applicants at its September 25, 2017 regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the HHS cafeteria. The Board will then vote in open session to appoint the new member.

### **Elementary Reconfiguration**

Our work in planning the reconfiguration of the elementary schools for 2018-19 is well underway. Throughout the summer, our school and PTO leaders worked to develop tasks and timelines and have addressed action items as well. We will be forming transition teams to assist with various decisions and tasks, and will keep you informed of those opportunities. We are also tentatively planning our first parent presentation and status update for some time in October. That information will be shared with you in advance.

### **AP Test Score Results**

We are pleased to share the results of the Hightstown High School 2016-17 AP tests. 345 tests were taken representing 21 separate courses. We are elated for our students that 87% of the tests taken were scored at a 3 or higher, 62% were scored at 4 or higher, and 31% scored a 5. Congratulations to our students for their achievements and our staff who provided the foundations needed to reach these heights.

### **MHK Task Force**

Keeping in line with the High School College and Career Readiness Task Force started last year, we have begun a Middle School Task Force that will focus on ensuring all students are ready for the rigor of high school. This Task Force consists of twelve teachers who are currently enrolled or have completed an administrative/supervisory program. This group includes special education, math, science, social studies, world language, language arts, and related arts teachers along with a child study team member, building administrators and supervisors. Meetings started over the summer and details of the work will be shared as it develops.

### **Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Screenings**

Save the date - The Deborah Hospital Foundation will be at Hightstown High School on October 21st to conduct sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) screenings. The program is designed to identify cardiovascular risks that can put students at risk for sudden cardiac arrest. Approximately 9500 youth per year suffer from a SCA and this voluntary program will help identify students who may be at risk.

The Deborah program is offered at no-cost to parents and will screen for the following:

- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy, Dilated cardiomyopathy, Myocarditis, Long QT syndrome, Brugada syndrome, Lenegre disease, Short QT syndrome, Preexcitation syndrome, Coronary artery diseases

The program is open to all students between the ages of 12-19. The evaluations will be conducted by board certified cardiologists, advanced practitioner nurses, certified physician assistants, registered nurses, and EKG and echocardiography technicians. We strongly encourage parents to take advantage of this program. More information will be sent out in late September.

## **Send Hunger Packing**

The nursing department is leading an initiative to partner with the Mercer Street Friends Food Bank to bring the "Send Hunger Packing" program to our district for the 2017-2018 school year.

The program meets the needs of hungry children by providing nutritious and easy-to-prepare food to take home on weekends and school vacations (excluding summer) when other resources are not available. The food is bagged and is handed out at the end of the week. In addition to the weekly bags, once a month students are provided with a jar of peanut butter and jelly. Additionally, once per quarter students are provided with a toothbrush and toothpaste. More information will be sent out to parents soon.

## **Facility Project Updates**

### Hightstown High School Boys and Girls Pool Locker Room

This summer we undertook a complete renovation of both pool locker rooms. We have completely renewed the space with new lockers, fixtures, and shower areas. Also among the list of improvements are a new epoxy non-slip floor, private changing areas, and a bathing suit dryer. This project is scheduled to be completed in mid-September.

### Melvin H. Kreps Middle School Phase II Athletic Field

The remaining athletic fields (field hockey, softball field, and soccer field) were completely renovated this summer to bring them up to the standard we established with last year's renovation of the baseball field and athletic field. The existing grass was removed and the top soil was stripped, filtered, and supplemented with new soil. This new "high grade" top soil was redistributed and regraded. Sod was installed in the immediate field playing areas with grass seed sowed in the surrounding areas. We extended the irrigation grid from the well we installed last summer to all of the fields.

### Ethel McKnight Elementary School Canopy

In early 2016, during a major wind event, the canopy of EMK was blown off its foundation and damaged the skylight in the main entry foyer to the school. We missed the 2016 summer construction window as we worked through the related insurance requirements. As we return to school this year the community will notice that the familiar (new) canopy has returned and the skylight has been replaced.

### Fueling Facility Pump Replacement

We operate a gas refueling station that is used by district vehicles as well as vehicles from East Windsor Township and Hightstown Borough through a shared service agreement. This summer we installed new pumps and a new fuel management software system to track usage and billing.

### Grace N Rogers Storm Drain Replacement

The storm drain located in the bus loop was reconstructed this summer.

### Partial Sidewalk Replacement at Rogers and Black Schools

Sections of sidewalk were replaced at both Rogers and Black schools.

### Melvin H Kreps Staff Mail Room

After 40 years the staff mail room received a face lift with new cabinetry and paint.

## **Welcome New Faculty / Staff**

### **EMK**

Kendra Eggert - Grade 4  
Maria De Leon Coste - Spanish  
Caitlyn Borzone - Special Education  
Lauren LoBue - Academic Support

### **PLD**

Lillian Fiore - Kindergarten  
Alysha Epstein - Grade 1  
Andrea Tarnavskyj - Grade 2  
Ashleigh Groome - Grade 5  
Thomas Elliott - Grade 5  
Maria De Leon Coste - Spanish  
Kiersten Gault - Special Education  
Lauren LoBue - Academic Support  
Timothy Roselle - Art  
Gina Raimondo - Nurse  
Michelle Farrell - Educational Assistant  
Jennifer Bavati - Kidcare Instructor  
Natalie Zodda - Kidcare Instructor  
Jennifer Lockwood - Cafeteria/Recess  
Lillian Perschetz - Cafeteria/Recess  
Helder Salvador - Cafeteria/Recess

### **GNR**

Alexzandria Tragno - Kindergarten  
Norella Abdelaziz - Spanish  
Jessica Stone - LDTC  
Jennifer Borg - Educational Assistant

### **WCB**

Victoria Ernst - Grade 3  
Taylor Katawick - Grade 3  
Jessica Pizzo - Grade 1  
Jennifer Roberts - Grade 1  
Norella Abdelaziz - Spanish  
Benjamin Kubey - Kidcare Instructor

### **MHK**

Aya Elgendy - English  
Erica Iezzi - ESL  
Rachel Kidd - English  
Kerriann Manziano - Health/Phys Ed  
Kevin Ott - Science  
Jennifer Pensabene - Special Education  
Elizabeth Rozansky - English  
Jessica Stone - LDTC

### **HHS**

Chris Guglielmo - Assistant Principal  
Davina Aziz - English  
Brandon Cameron - ESL  
Kelsey Collins - English  
Matthew Flores - Social Studies  
Jennifer Flynn - Social Studies  
Chazarre Freeman - English  
Juan Juarado - Spanish  
Christian Knott - Health/Phys Ed  
Jennifer Mora - School Counselor  
Erin Scheno - Health/Phys Ed  
Rene Ybarbo - Spanish  
Johanna Hernandez - Secretary

### **Transportation**

Thomas Crystall - Mechanic/Driver  
Guilbaud Chery - Bus Driver  
Robert Constantini - Mechanic/Driver

### **Administration**

Christine Steiner - K-2 Supervisor  
Christopher Gabbai - At-Risk Supervisor  
Andrew Polo - Assistant Business  
Administrator