

Superintendent's Report February 2015

- February 7th our Board of Education and Central Office administrators held a meeting with our legislators: Senator Skelos, and Assemblymen Curran and Kaminsky. We provided a good deal of information about our successes and challenges, how the reduction in state aid and the GEA has impacted our district and what are our goals and needs for the future. It was a productive conversation and we received positive feedback from our legislators.
- Please visit our website for an important letter and link to Senator Skelos' petition to fully eliminate the GEA. This appears on all four home pages of our district's website. I hope you will take the time to sign the petition and publicize this in the community.
- The Reading Action Committee at Centre Avenue has planned a Community Reader's event during the month of February. East Rockaway community members and administrators will be reading aloud a story to specific grade level classes and will be explaining who they are and what they do for our community and/or school district.
- Councilman Anthony Santino visited Rhame Avenue on Monday morning as a guest reader. He visited a Kindergarten class and read the story, *Ella's Trip to the Museum*. He also visited a third grade class to read, *Just Grace Goes Green* and had a follow-up discussion with the children about recycling and conservation and the role he plays as a councilman to make sure these things take place right here in our own community.

- Centre Avenue second grade is having a guide dog assembly. It matches up with our unit on Helen Keller, which also ties in our biography module of people "who make a difference." This also dovetailed nicely with our Abilities Week activities across all three schools which were coordinated by Ms. Guggino-Hastings during the week of February 9th. Activities were planned throughout that week that celebrated the outstanding abilities of those with "disabilities." A highlight of the week was a special assembly, held in all three buildings, led by Dennis Oehler, a Paralympic gold medal athlete and motivational speaker who captures the students' attention with his personal story of triumph and success living with a prosthetic leg.
- Our elementary schools recently completed a "Beautiful Me" girls' group run by our social worker, Ms. Ragone, and school psychologists, Ms. Smith and Ms. Saavedra. "Beautiful Me" is a self-esteem program designed to educate females by promoting appreciation for their genuine qualities, accurate self-awareness, and the satisfaction of helping others. We have received such great feedback from the students and parents that a new 4th grade group will begin at the end of February.
- The kindergarten students celebrated the 100 days of school! They had a presentation in the All-Purpose Room and invited 100 guests which included parents, grandparents and other family members...and even one of our Board members...Mr. Gamache!!!
- March is Music in Our Schools Month and the Music Department will participate in various ways this year. Students participating in the Piano NYSSMA Festival will

play for their class and Vocal NYSSMA lessons will be under way. Music facts and jokes will be part of the morning announcements and Music Questions of the Week will be posted in each building. We know that music is an important component of a child's education and we plan to enhance this experience as much as possible throughout the month.

- Students at Rhame Avenue have recently published their first Informational Writing pieces of the year. Bulletin boards are filled with a wide variety of reports and projects of which students are extremely proud. In alignment with the Common Core Standards, each grade level chose a unit of study in Social Studies or Science to connect with writing. Sixth grade classes researched a wide variety of carriers and also wrote about *The Code of Hammurabi vs. The Bill of Rights*. We are so very proud of our students' accomplishments and the planning and preparation demonstrated by their teachers to design these engaging units.
- Leading up to Valentine's Day, the Rhame Avenue fifth graders completed "Random Acts of Kindness." Students participated in at least one kind act each day of the week and shared their "random acts of kindness" with each other and talked about how they made people feel. Our fourth grade students are working on writing a song in music class for their "Random Acts of Kindness" projects.
- Congratulations to the cast and crew of *Willy Wonka* on their outstanding performance in this year's musical. They performed to a packed audience at each performance and everyone in attendance truly seemed to enjoy the show. Our performers received high praise from the audience.

- Rock Rivalry season has officially begun with the Volleyball competition. This Thursday will be Sports Night. Entrance is scheduled for Friday, March 20th.
- Our middle school teachers continue to work with consultant, Nancy Doda, a national expert on middle level education. She has provided workshops, small group teacher support and is currently coteaching lessons with our faculty to support our new middle school model. As part of this initiative, teachers have also been on several site visits to observe various middle school approaches across Long Island.
- Our first meeting of our Strategic Planning Committee will take place on March 5th. Thank you to all who volunteered for our committee – we have over 30 members who will serve.