

Superintendent's Report
October 2014

Welcome. I would like to extend my sincerest thank you to the East Rockaway Kiwanis Club for their continued support and generous donation which enabled us to continue the Builder's Club now in its fourth year.

Thank you to the Rhame Avenue PTA for coordinating the Board Appreciation Night presentation and a very special thank you to our student performers.

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the East Rockaway School District, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to our Board of Education Trustees for the significant time and unwavering dedication they give to their positions. I am honored to be working with this fine and dedicated group of individuals.

School Board Trustees are Volunteers

- *They receive no pay nor any type of compensation for their service.*
- *School board members take their responsibility and public trust very seriously, dedicating an enormous number of hours to their work both in and outside of board meetings*
 - *Attending school functions*
 - *Preparing for board meetings*
 - *Reading financial reports, agendas and proposals, and*
 - *Making a host of difficult and challenging decisions are just a few of the regular activities board members participate in through their service.*
- *School boards provide adequate resources to ensure student achievement*
- *Serve as fiscal stewards of the district*
- *Ensure accountability to taxpayers*
- *Establish key goals for their school district*
- *Form partnerships with others in the community, and*
- *Create a safe, orderly learning environment.*

- *They must sometimes make tough decisions*
- *Study a variety of education issues*
- *Prepare budgets and track performance in order to provide the kind of accountability that this community expects*
- *And one of the most important jobs they do is hire a new superintendents!*
- *This is quite a list of responsibilities and our board certainly does this job with aplomb, commitment, and hard work.*

Once again, words are truly inadequate to *thank you for your service and dedication to our community.*

Middle School

- On October 15, eighth grade students took a trip to the 9/11 Museum and Memorial. Students were impacted by the experience in a meaningful and reflective manner.
- In recognition of October's theme of Anti-Bullying the High School PTA, in collaboration with school administration, has invited an Assistant District Attorney from the Nassau County District Attorney's Office to speak to our students about the dangers and effects of cyberbullying. Ms. Schutta and Mr. O'Driscoll have visited our middle school classes, with the assistance of peer leaders, to discuss safe cyber surfing on social media sites with our middle school students. Additionally, our middle school students have taken the Anti-Bullying Pledge in their school by signing the banner in their school which will be on display in the Middle School Wing later this month.

Academics

- Diana Sharkey was recognized as a Commended Student by the College Board's National Merit Program
- On October 15, tenth and eleventh grade students were administered the PSAT exam for the first time as a group during the school day. Students took the opportunity seriously. We look forward to the score reports in December.

Arts

- 130 audition packets were given out to students on Oct 7 in grades 4-12 who will be auditioning for this year's musical, *Willy Wonka*. Auditions will take place October 22 – 24.

Technology

- Technology Department also hosted a VEX Robotics workshop last week in which approximately 30 Technology teachers from numerous schools in Nassau County were privy to hands on arena training techniques as well as computer programming strategies. It was a most successful workshop and will be the catalyst for our next robotics competition hosted here at East Rockaway High School. We are expecting a big turnout this year!
- Students in technology classes assembled the two picnic tables in front of the school, designed and fabricated a stainless steel shield to protect the water filter for the new water fountain/bottle filler by the small gym (Design and Drawing for Production), and refinished one of the three tables in the reading classroom (multiple classes including Grade 8). I also received a gift of a beautiful wood cutting board made from the recycled gym floor board by our technology students.

Health

- In Health 11, students recently completed "Life Story" posters. The work was completed during the "empathy" unit.
- In Health 7, students viewed "Bully" film.

- October is Bullying awareness/prevention month and students are currently working on SADD posters.

Physical Education

- We now have Polar Heart Rate Monitors which are used in classes to increase cardiovascular fitness, and reports are emailed to students for analysis.
- Both gyms are now equipped with smart boards which are used in daily instruction for video analysis both on the web and authentic in class movements.

Athletics

- Fall season is coming to a close within two weeks:
- **Varsity records as of October 17, 2014**
- Football 2-3
- Girls Soccer 9 – 1- 1
- Boys Soccer 1-11
- Cross Country Boys 1-6
- Girls 4-3
- Volleyball 1-11

- The gym floor came out fantastic and we thank all who contributed to its final outcome.

Elementary Schools

- The Centre Avenue PARP program is in full swing with students reading multiple minutes with parents at home. Students and Parents log minutes and students complete book reviews for a chance to update the Principal's Pirate Eye Patch on the PTA PARP bulletin board.
- The Centre Avenue PTA held a school-wide assembly titled, *The Story Pirates*. Actors ad lib story starters given by the students. Children then are prompted to write stories at home and submit them to the traveling troop that will return Centre and act out a story written by the children.
- Grade level teachers are meeting district wide with Mr. Piccarella to analyze our assessment data to inform and guide teaching in the classrooms.
- Second grade teacher, Mary Arapas, is running a collegial circle to read and discuss the professional resource, *The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy in the Early Grades*. Centre Avenue has over 20 teachers meeting during their lunch period for this purpose.
- Centre Avenue School has submitted over 100 Andrew Stern 9/11 essays that students completed on their own time. This year's prompt: *The 9/11 Museum opened this year in New York City. Explain how you think it can be used to educate students and others about the events of that day.*

- Parent Teacher Conferences are being scheduled for October 30th and November 6th. Please return your sign-up form.
- October is Unity month and our elementary schools are recognizing this with many anti-bullying activities. Students wore orange as a sign that we are united in working together to put a stop to bullying. In addition, students are continuing to write weekly tips related to bullying that are shared during the “Newscasters” morning announcements.
- Fourth grade students in Mrs. Kane's class at Rhame Avenue have been analyzing song lyrics to raise awareness about bullying. Students listened and watched the music videos for the songs "Mean" by Taylor Swift, as well as "Brave" by Sara Bareilles, to better empathize with targets of bullying and gain confidence to not be a bystander. They used close reading and inferential strategies to break the songs up into stanzas and lines to better understand the messages of the songs and discuss how they could use the themes of these songs in their own lives.
- The kindergarten, first and second graders have been learning about fire safety this month. Each class walked to the East Rockaway Firehouse and learned all about what to do in case of a fire. They also got to practice, “Stop, Drop and Roll” and each child had a turn to ring the bell on the fire truck before heading back to school.
- The third grade learned about the scientific method by creating a hypothesis about bubble wands of different shapes and sizes. Each class went outside to test their hypothesis and found that all shapes create round bubbles. Their hypotheses’ were incorrect, but students learned a lot about the force of wind and its effect on the size of bubbles one creates.
- Our PTA has organized this year’s “Pumpkin Patch” and “Halloween Fest” for all students this Friday. All students will have an opportunity to pick their own pumpkins from the field outside. Our 5th grade buddies and 6th grade Safety Patrol members will help the little ones pick them out. Students are looking forward to playing games, trick-or-treating, and trying to make it out of the haunted house in one piece!