

Superintendent's Report
September 2014

The beginning of the year is a good time to remind everyone of the district's communication protocol, *WHO DO I CALL WITH A QUESTION OR SUGGESTION*, which can be found under the Contact tab of the district's website.

The Board will also note that in this evening's packet was a report that must be reviewed annually on attendance data for each building in the district, as well as attendance for ALPSS.

Elementary Schools

At Centre Avenue, Grade 2 students worked on their writing about Patriots' Day. After reading the "America" poem, the students will be able to discuss why they love America and what makes America so special.

Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Banducci, and Mrs. Kennedy's class, along with students from our high school attended, the Surfers Healing Program on Wednesday, September 10, at Lido Beach West. All the children were very brave and went surfing in the ocean with trained instructors. This program was created to provide a kind of therapy to students with special needs and help boost their confidence.

Our club programs began this week Rhame. The Before School Sports Program and the Walking Club are opportunities for students to participate in more structured physical activity. Other clubs starting the week of September 15th are: Art Club, Band, Chorus, Orchestra, Newscasters, Safety Patrol and Student Council.

The Rhame PTA kicked off their annual Book Fair the week of September 10. All the children were excited to visit their library. Grades K-2 enjoyed shopping with their parents.

Our elementary schools now each have 2.5 Reading teachers to help meet the needs of the students and the faculty to help improve student achievement.

We are updating our student information system and have sent home a letter for parents to update their contact information, especially email addresses so that we contact you quickly and efficiently. Please return your form as soon as possible.

Rhame Avenue's Back to School Night was a great success. There were many parents in attendance and they were able to meet with their child's teacher. Parents left with an understanding of curriculum, homework, procedures, and academic expectations for their children. Centre Avenue's Back to School Night is scheduled for this Thursday night 7:30 PM. They are hoping for a great turn-out as our parents are an extremely important factor in student growth. Teachers have honed their presentations to parents so they know what is expected of the students and how parents can help.

Students in grades 4 – 12 are participating in the Andrew Stern Essay Contest. This year's topic: Explain how you think the 9/11 Museum, which just opened this year, can be used to educate students and others about the events of that day.

Bully prevention is a top priority at all of our schools this year. October is Bullying Prevention month. We will be hosting a very important parent presentation on Bullying on October 8 – a flyer went home yesterday. Both elementary buildings are engaging in various grade appropriate activities such as the lessons in our Health Smart curriculum, social workers are leading activities and school wide announcements reinforce appropriate behavior among the students. A number of our teachers also worked on a summer curriculum project to develop curriculum embedded lessons to support the DASA – the Dignity for All Students Act and our middle school is investigating a research-based curriculum entitled, Lion's Quest, for possible implementation. A requirement of the Dignity Act is to provide instruction in civility, citizenship, and character education through social and emotional skill building, bullying and substance abuse prevention and service-learning activities.

Elementary teachers in grades K-4, reading teachers, and teaching assistants participated in professional development provided by consultant, Dr. Christopher Parker, on data driven literacy instruction and interventions.

East Rockaway Jr/Sr High School

The New York State Art Teachers Association will host an Art Exhibit at the New York State School Boards Convention. School Board members from across New York State will view the artwork and see the artistic excellence and evidence of art education in the New York State Schools. The following students' artwork will represent East Rockaway Public Schools at this exhibit:

Theresa Fusco, ERHS (Mrs. Collins)
Alisha Khan, HS (Mrs. Collins)
Allyson Lovera, Centre (Mrs. Brody)
Emily Ramos, Rhame (Mrs. Brody)

A reception will be held on Monday, October 27, 2014. The exhibit and reception will be held at the Sheraton New York at Time Square – 811 7th Ave, NYC, from 5:00 to 6:30 pm, on the 3rd Floor, New York/Carnegie Foyer. Additional artwork can be found on the lower level. Thank you to our art teachers, Ms. Collins and Ms. Brody, for supporting our students.

Middle School

The Middle School welcomed its 7th grade class with an Orientation Program in late August that introduced students to the school program and helped to ease their transition. The program was capped off by the varsity football team leading students through a series of team-building activities, followed by lunch. Thank you to the PTA for its generous donation and support.

Seventh grade students are adjusting to life in a new building. Many are being helped by a new course – College and Career Readiness – that is outlining a transition plan for students.

The Middle School Committee will soon meet to take its first steps towards fulfilling the Middle School vision. Teachers also met with Dr. Nancy Doda, a national consultant, who will provide ongoing staff development this year for our teachers and administrators.

Academics

The Advanced Placement Program is celebrating great results from last May's exam administration. Participation is at an all-time high, with 74 students taking a total of 141 exams. Also, 77% of last year's students scored a 3 or higher, also an all-time high. The 5-year trend for the program shows that participation and achievement are both on the rise.

Homecoming

Homecoming will take place this weekend, beginning with a parade down Atlantic Avenue that will lead to the Pep Rally, which is being held outside on the field. The parade will leave at 6:30 and arrive at the high school by 7:00. We hope you will join us for the parade, Pep Rally and homecoming game.

Student Council has organized Spirit Week, which is being ramped up with hallway decoration, also sponsored by the PTA.

Guidance Department

The East Rockaway High School Guidance Department is excited to announce the following college trips for October 2014 (open to juniors and seniors):

University of Connecticut: October 22, 2014

East Stroudsburg University: October 29, 2014

Thank you to Ms. Hecht for her efforts.

Advanced Placement Results

The Advanced Placement program has shown significant improvements in both participation and achievement. Over the last 5 years, the total number of students participating in the program has increased from 51 to 74, and the total number of exams from 92 to 141, while the rate of students scoring a 3 or better has improved from 43 % to 77%. In fact, last year's achievement is 10% higher than New York State, and 16% higher than the global average.

We received our NYS assessment scores for the 2014 school year. We will be providing a district data snapshot at our November Board of Education meeting which will examine various measure of achievement data across the district. We are in the process of analyzing our scores to identify patterns of strengths and areas for improvement. We are concerned about our results relative to other districts across Nassau County and New York State. Our analysis of our New York State assessment results will help to identify where we need to focus our efforts to improve these results, as well as overall student achievement, particularly as we continue to transition to the Common Core Learning Standards.

The district's mascot, The Rockman, has been involuntarily retired. We received a cease and desist letter from Marvel Comics. Therefore, the district will no longer be using the image of The Rockman in our sports program.

Mr. Robinson will share some information on our facilities:

The emergency that occurred in the high school last night was created by smoke from a defective light ballast in the small gym. The fire department was called and arrived at the building to ensure the area was safe. We also had it all cleared by an environmentalist. Everything was cleared to re-occupy the building.

There is no doubt that we had a tumultuous start with the SCOPE After School Program. Many of the obstacles have been overcome with a few outstanding items. I have spoken to parents and we understand it has been frustrating for them. The management of SCOPE had the opportunity to offer a program that met our needs. We have a firm commitment from them to see it through and overcome the rest of the obstacles and we are communicating with them on a regular basis to address every concern that has been raised. They are holding a job fair on October 7th to enable them to staff both the Rhame and Centre program completely.

Our food service management contract with Whitsons was not renewed this year. We went through the RFP process and Aramark won the bid. They were able to come in and retooled each building. The feedback has been good.

The gym floor has been replaced. There was moisture collecting under the floor and it caused buckling in various areas. It needed to be replaced and it was covered by the insurance company. We anticipate it being completed within the next week or so.