



H a c k e t t s t o w n P u b l i c S c h o o l s N e w s l e t t e r

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

David C. Mango

Winter 2016

Dear Parents, Faculty, Staff, and Community Members:

With the holiday season approaching, it is always an excellent time to be reflective in thought and express appreciation for that which we have. I am extremely honored to serve the communities of Independence, Liberty, and Hackettstown. Over the course of the last five years we have witnessed change from both a school and community perspective. During that time, several initiatives have been established, and now we are witnessing the fruits of our labor. That said, there are still major concerns that lie ahead. However, as I have always believed, we can achieve any goal or obstacle that presents itself.

Since the beginning of this school year, we have been publicly honoring our Students of the Month at our public board of education meetings. This has enhanced the school communities and set an example of the expectation levels for our students and proving to our students that hard work should be rewarded. Moreover, through our partnership with the High School Student Council, we have begun the exploration for increasing AP, elective, and language courses via survey. We believe that input from our student body should direct final course selections in order to preserve student interest and sustainability. In addition, we are witnessing how the implementation of instructional technology assists our parents, students and staff through the use of Bedtime Math, while Innovate NJ models 21st skills for global learning and awareness.

As recognizing students in the area of academic excellence, we must also recognize excellence in the athletic arena. Another area that central office and the high school administration have been working collaboratively on is Hackettstown High School's first ever, Athletic Hall of Fame. We are currently developing our mission statement, criteria, and selection process with our committee members. All of this information will be presented at our April 2017 public meeting, and our target date for the inaugural ceremonies is October of 2017. The committee is working diligently on the nominee process, and our goal is to contact the community for the function of this process with a tentative target date of February 2017.

In addition to all of the current happenings between the districts, we are forecasting the 2017-18 budget process. This process will be cumbersome as several educational and facility initiatives are at our forefront and future. Glancing ahead, we are looking to implement a Preschool program at Willow Grove School and Central School, as well as, create the stand alone county Adult High School Program. The Adult High School Program will be presented at our February 2017 public meeting, so I encourage all to attend. This will offer students from our home districts the opportunity to obtain their high school credentials on a flexible schedule and generate revenue from incoming students from our county and surrounding counties that do not offer such a program.

In closing, my holiday wish to our communities is a simple request. As you can see there are many current and new items on the horizon that can benefit not only our students and staff, but communities at large. So my request is that you make one of your New Year's resolutions to become actively involved and attend our Hackettstown and Great Meadows public meetings. There are many wonderful initiatives taking place and so much more to achieve, so please get involved within the walls of our school communities.

As always, I thank you for partnering and supporting our school districts, students, and staff and wish you and your families a healthy and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

David C. Mango

Superintendent of Schools

Great Meadows Regional and Hackettstown Public Schools

As the Holidays approach our Hatchery Hill Community reflects on the importance of providing students with a positive and encouraging atmosphere so that each will work toward their potential. We believe in a balanced education for our students, so we have enhanced our core subject area curriculums and instituted new initiatives to meet the needs of our critical thinking, 21st century problem solving students. The Hatchery Hill staff continues to focus on our math and language arts programs and developing depth in knowledge of concepts for our students.

Our students are continuing to embrace STEM/STEAM, Computer Science and MakerSpace challenges within the curriculum. The newly designed Hatchery Hill **Thinklab** is located in the library and the children are applying problem solving skills to solve a number of engineering challenges using LEGO's, Marble Mazes, and Zoobs. Future projects include exploring geometry concepts by building domes using Zometools, designing book characters using IO Blocks, exploring science concepts using magnets and program Dash and Dot robots to complete specific challenges. Some of our teachers are certified Code.org instructors. After attending coding workshops these staff members are introducing Computer Science to their students. Other teachers have attended the Makers Education workshops at Rutgers University. We are also introducing a computer language program called Scratch. On December 16th we are planning our first "Stem Day" and parents will be invited to participate.

Hatchery Hill is looking forward to the return of our Rutgers Literacy Coach who will be working with staff and students This increases teacher awareness of strategies and resources available to meet the needs of our population. This is professional development within our school and with our student population which has proven to be effective and beneficial.

Save the date...Our Winter Concert for Grades 1-4 will take place on December 9th at 11:30. Hope to see all of you there! Many thanks to our parents who are supportive and work with the Hatchery Hill staff so that *"Together We Can Make a Difference!"*

Hackettstown Public Schools Mission Statement

Building on tradition and success, the mission of the Hackettstown School District is to educate and inspire students through school, family and community partnerships so that all become positive, contributing members of a global society, with life-long commitment to learning.

Strategic Plan Vision 2018

Goal # 1 Student Achievement

Provide opportunities for all learners, through a variety of all programs as supported by technology and measured through the administration of benchmarks assessments.

Goal # 2 Finance/Facilities

Facilities

Maximize resources of the district to ensure safe, secure, technologically advanced schools.

Finance

Maximize savings through shared services and securing grants by hiring a professional grant writer.

Goal # 3 Communication

Embrace, expand, and utilize all technological advancements of our global societal shift as a means of communication from school to home and community are actively and positively involved.

Goal # 4 Culture and Climate

Develop a multi-cultural climate where all participants of our home and school community are actively and positively involved.

"Determination, Dream, and Destiny by Design"

As this newsletter is published Hackettstown High School enters the Holiday Season and Winter months, looking forward to the opportunities that 2017 has in store, preparing for midterm exams, creating budgets for our next fiscal year, and placing a strong focus on academic scheduling for the 2017-2018 school year. Recently, we began celebrating the achievements of some of our standout Seniors at HHS by honoring them at monthly Board Meetings. Students of the Month Raegan Davies, Jacklyn Russo, and Pia Bangug were selected from among our teaching staff as those individuals who possess and portray the highest ideals of students in good standing, an exemplar for their peers, and represent what Hackettstown stands for. Next, students from 8th-12th grades participated in a survey that asked for input on future electives the high school might offer and what interest exists in different World Language offerings. Staff will examine the results and adjust our course offerings appropriately for families to peruse and select.

Our administrative team will soon visit Hackettstown Middle School, Great Meadows Middle School, and Allamuchy Middle School to begin sharing information about scheduling for freshman year. Parents will be invited to an evening event which will review this information and allow for Q&A. Continued visits by our guidance counselors will occur in January and February to meet with 8th graders individually for the purpose of creating a schedule for their first year in high school. And, shortly, the midterm exam schedule will be available on our website; exams are scheduled for the week of January 16-20, 2017.

In Athletics we leave behind a fantastic fall athletic season. Our Field Hockey Team was named NJAC Freedom Division Champions, and Molly Gorczyca signed her National Letter of Intent to play field hockey at Division 1 Monmouth University. Football, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Field Hockey, Boys & Girls Cross Country ALL qualified for playoffs. 24 HHS athletes were selected as 1st or 2nd All Conference Teams for the Northwest Jersey Athletic Conference. In Cheerleading, Adrianna Kirdzik has been named to the New Jersey Cheer and Dance All State Team, and she earned the Complete Athlete Award at the Destination Athlete Showcase. Additionally, Caitlyn Spuckes earned the Rising Star Award at the Destination Athlete Showcase. This was an amazing season for our athletes and coaches, and certainly an exciting one. Lastly, the cherry on top comes by way of Hackettstown High School winning the All-Sport NJSIAA Sportsmanship Award Banner for 2015-16 school year for the second year in a row. This achievement brings special pride because it speaks so highly of the quality of character and integrity of all of our coaches and athletes. Our theatre department brought *Anne of Green Gables to the Hackettstown community*, and under Mr. Christopher Zwarych's new leadership, the Tiger Marching Band enjoyed a banner season of competition locally and throughout the state.

A significant portion of our second semester will also be spent planning for summer construction projects aimed at improving and beautifying our campus and keeping it as safe as possible for students, staff, and parents who visit. A new lobby vestibule is schedule for construction, remodeling our lobby bathrooms, possibly refurbishing our school library, and HVAC in our auditorium are all on the docket, pending available budget funds. We are excited to see the changes these projects will bring to HHS.



In the previous newsletter, the Middle School's building goal for 2016-2018 was introduced to the community. In introducing the goal, to foster literacy, problem solving, and critical thinking across all content areas and beyond the School's walls in an information rich, global society, a segment of the goal sparked a considerable number of conversations. The conversation starter within the goal was "and beyond the School's walls" as many individuals had various interpretations of what these words meant as well as how to accomplish the objective. To help clarify the intent of the goal and an emphasized focus at HMS, I will discuss more specifically what the School stakeholders who developed these words intended them to mean.

In looking at the future of schools, it is the Middle School's belief that the most successful schools of tomorrow will be the ones that are able to maximize learning beyond the traditional school day of eight to three. In order to do this, schools need to reimagine homework, strategically integrate technology into the learning process, and analyze how learning outside of school can help to maximize the learning that takes place within classrooms during the school day.

In examining the role of homework, the Middle School continues to focus on "flipping the classroom." This is an instructional practice that utilizes homework as the means for having students acquire background information via reading texts, previewing videos, etc. In return, students enter classrooms the following day with "information" prepared to engage in vibrant student-centered conversations and activities requiring them to apply the acquired information gained from the prior night. This approach is a paradigm shift for homework in that homework becomes a prerequisite for tomorrow's lesson versus a review and practice of today's lesson

Facilitating the "flipped classroom" is the integration of technology. Technology, such as Google Classroom, provides teachers with a vehicle to deliver content to their students 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Google Classroom also allows teachers to facilitate an ongoing classroom conversation that has no start and end time. Teachers have the ability to pose questions to their students via Google Classroom at any hour of the day, and students can engage in a continuous, online conversation regarding the posts. Not only does this technology tool extend learning beyond the school's bells, but it also promotes collaboration in a 21st century learning environment. Like the most successful schools across the Nation, HMS is looking to harness technology's capabilities and couple it with instructional best practices to "extend learning beyond the School's walls," so our students' potential can be maximized!

Curriculum Corner, Nadia Inskeep - Director of Curriculum and Instruction

I would like to take this opportunity to extend thanks to the parents, teachers and administrators who attended the Title I Parent Involvement Meeting in November. The Parent Involvement meeting is an important part of the grant process and it also provides an opportunity to hear direct feedback on the programs that we are able to offer with our Federal Grant Funding.

Recent changes related to New Jersey's Academic Standards are being addressed with our administration and staff. The teachers are wrapping up revisions to Language Arts Curriculum and we will be moving on to Math and Science in the next few months.

As the District is heading into budget development for the 2017-2018 school year, I am currently working with Mr. Redmon the Director of Instructional technology, principals and teachers to research new science resources and technology platforms for integrated and cross curricular programs to enhance classroom instruction.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Nadia Inskeep

The 2016-2017 school year has gotten off to a fantastic start and looks to be filled with excitement, opportunity, and engaging learning experiences for our students! This year at Willow Grove, we will continue to focus on presenting a comprehensive and challenging academic program for our students to prepare them to be successful as 21st Century learners. Rigorous and relevant instruction will provide learning experiences that allow our students to grow and achieve in a manner that best suits them and their abilities. Our building goal is to incorporate opportunities for our students to grow their engineering design skills through problem based and inquiry based learning activities. Students have completed numerous projects including water filtration systems, 3D printing, scarecrow prototyping, and computer programming! The possibilities are endless when we connect to real world applications of our skills and creative minds!

In addition to our rich academic program, Willow Grove offers a wide range of after-school opportunities for students for enrichment and/or academic support. These TIGERS Clubs and Academic Support Clubs include titles such as Sports and Fitness, Skillbuilders STEM, Fun with Literature, LEGO Robotics, Skillbuilders Tech Time, Battle of the Books, Raz Kids, Drama Club, WG Yoga Club and many, many more! This wide range enables students to pursue their interests in an educational and fun way!

Communication with our school community is a vital area that we look to strengthen each year. Providing information on student progress and achievement and important dates and events to the school community in a timely fashion is important in maintaining a positive and supportive relationship that benefits our students. In addition, we constantly look for ways to celebrate our students' and our staffs' wonderful accomplishments and successes. To catch snapshots of our school and important reminders, follow us on Twitter at [@WGLittleTigers](https://twitter.com/WGLittleTigers) or check our website at www.hackettstown.org/wges to stay current with events, check our TIGERS and Academic Support Calendars, or see all of the other great happenings at Willow Grove!

A couple of important dates and reminders:

Friday, December 2nd - End of 1st Marking Period

Friday, December 9th - Report Cards Sent Home

Friday, December 9th - Willow Grove Holiday Concert (Grades 1-4)

Tuesday, December 13th - Hackettstown Elem. PTA Meeting, 7:00 pm @ HMS

Friday, December 16th - Willow Grove Kindergarten Holiday Concert

Tuesday, January 3rd - Hackettstown Elem. PTA Meeting, 7:00 pm @ HMS

Friday, January 6th - THE BRAIN SHOW!

Monday, January 23rd - Friday, January 27th - The Great Kindness Challenge

Friday, January 27th - Early Dismissal at 12:30 pm, Parent Teacher Conferences

We are enjoying another fantastic and successful school year! Stop in or follow us to see our [#wgpride!](https://twitter.com/WGLittleTigers)



We are on the web!

www.hackettstown.org

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Important Dates to Remember

December 14, 2016: Board of Education Meeting

December 23, 2016: Early Dismissal All Schools

December 26 - 30, 2016: Holiday Break All Schools Closed

January 2, 2017: All School Re-Open

January 16, 2017: All Schools Closed Martin Luther King Day Teacher In-Service

February 20, 2017: All Schools Closed President's Day

March 29 —31, 2017 HHS PARCC Testing

April 4 - 7, 10 - 13, 2017 HHS PARCC Testing

April 13, 2017: Early Dismissal All Schools

April 14, 17 - 21, 2017 Spring Holiday All Schools Closed (*Dependent Upon Emergency Closings*)

April 25 - May 19, 2016 Willow Grove PARCC Testing

April 3 - 5 4th Grade ELA & April 6 - 10 3rd grade ELA Hatchery Hill PARCC Testing

May 1 - 4 4th Grade Math & May 8 - 11 3rd Grade Math Hatchery Hill PARCC Testing

April 26 - May 3, 2017 Grades 7 & 8 HMS PARCC Testing (*Tentative*)

May 5 - 12, 2017 Grades 5 & 6 HMS PARCC Testing (*Tentative*)

Please Check the District Calendar at www.hackettstown.org for 2017 Board Meeting Dates

Check your child's Local School Calendar for Important Dates.