



Superintendent's Update

November 2008

Important Dates

November 19th (7:30 p.m., HSN Library)

November 20th (evening), 21st, 24th and 25th

November 24th (7:30 p.m., HSN Library)

November 27th and 28th

Board of Education Workshop Meeting—Public Hearing on Abuse of Prescription Drugs & Addition to Random Drug Testing Program

Elementary School Parent Conferences

Board of Education Voting Meeting

District Closed for Thanksgiving Recess

Preschool Expansion Mandate

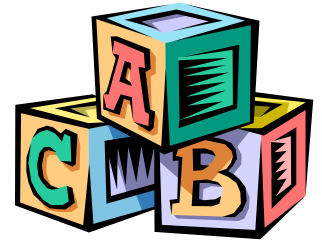
Important: Full-day preschool registration information for income eligible three and four-year-old students is available on the district website at www.middletownk12.org.

The NJ State Department of Education has issued a mandate that all New Jersey Public Schools must provide a full day preschool education for income eligible three and four-year-old children within a five year period. The mandate will be fully funded by the NJDOE and additional start-up costs to purchase furniture and classroom materials are provided by the State if a district targets at least 90% of the income eligible students by the 2009-10 school year. Income eligibility is determined through completion of the Free or Reduced Lunch Application process. With the incentive of the State funding, the Middletown Public School District is planning to offer a program to 90% of its income eligible population, which means that 127 Middletown 3 and 4 year old students will receive a free, full-day preschool education next year and the Middletown Public School District will receive more than \$1.6 million in State Aid to provide that education.

How will the preschool program work? The school district's plan is to lease space from the Community YMCA's Hazlet facility, located on Route 36 and Poole Avenue, just north of Middletown to provide 9 full day preschool classes. The facility was already designed for early childhood programming so the classrooms are perfect for preschool education. The district will be using the seven classrooms already dedicated to half-day preschool within the elementary schools (1 at Bayview, 2 at Nut Swamp and 4 at New Monmouth). They will become full-day preschool classrooms next year.

We will be eligible to receive the full funding, over \$1.6 million, because we are prepared to launch a full

program in September 2009. This funding will provide the start-up costs to equip the Hazlet facility with all the furniture, technology and instructional materials necessary to operate a high quality preschool program for our students. The funds will also



provide the following positions: 10 teachers, 1 nurse, a supervisor or director of early childhood education, a master teacher / parent liaison, a secretary, and professional development in Creative Curriculum, which is the curriculum model we utilize in our in-district classrooms. The network of preschool classes will provide an important head start for our district's students, where we will focus on early literacy and math skills as well as the social/emotional learning needed to insure our students' success throughout their school career. Our classes will provide opportunities for inclusion of students with disabilities and will provide all of the supports they need for their success. A major focus will be on parent education, so that children's progress can be supported in the home environment. The YMCA will continue to be on hand to provide enriching before and after-school experiences, at low cost to working parents who need those services. Registration for the preschool program will be held at Nut Swamp and Port Monmouth Elementary Schools on January 5, 6, 12 and 14th, 2009, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Looking down the road, the district is working on a plan to implement full-day kindergarten for all children as we move into the 2010-2011 school year. Rather than purchasing or leasing additional facilities that will be cost prohibitive, the district plans to reallocate existing space in the elementary school buildings so kindergarten students will primarily be able to attend their home schools.

LEADS Public Website

Parents now have the opportunity to view the LEADS website that was originally available only to teachers. To find the site, go the District Website and click on "LEADS". Parents will find the actual units teachers are using in grades 3 through 8, including the theme, unit overview, the core novel and guided reading levels that are above and below grade expectancy. "Driving Questions", which are related to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, spark the ideas for PBL's, or Problem Based Learning activities. Parents will be able to view these questions, as well as additional readings and the reading levels of the materials. The additional readings often provide the research for the PBL's, along with internet resources, which are also listed. Links allow the parent or student to go right to the source, so work can be done at home as well as in school.

The descriptions of short and long-term projects are particularly helpful for parents; they provide a deep level of understanding of the LEADS methodology and give parents insights into how their children are learning in the classroom. Lists of additional readings include not only the level of the book (A= Average; C = Challenging; E = Easy), but a review of the books so students can decide whether the book is appealing. Choice is a major feature of the LEADS methodology, so the reviews and levels provide a basis for the students to make a good decision.



Beyond the actual units of study, the LEADS website contains a complete list of the research that supports the LEADS initiative. For example, there is a great article on vocabulary and the importance of reading both fiction and non-fiction materials in order to build that vocabulary. Another important article focuses on the services provided for students with disabilities within the LEADS model.

Upcoming School Events

High School North Fall Play:	"Sweeney Todd"	November 20th through November 22nd
New Monmouth School Play:	"The Pied Piper Wild West Show"	November 21st at 7 pm
Thompson Middle School:	Granny's Attic Craft Fair	November 22nd
Thorne Middle School:	Variety Show	November 19th at 7 pm
High School South Fall Play:	"Picasso at Lapin Agile"	December 5th and 6th



FYI: Each school lists their calendar of events on their school calendar, which can be accessed through the District Website (middletownk12.org). To view, select the school under the "Calendar" tab and "Go".

From Our Students...

The High School North Environmental SEARCH Club is seeking to raise money to assist one of our High School North alumni, Kristin Habeck, in her efforts to build a school in Senegal, West Africa. Ms. Habeck, a 2001 HSN graduate and 2005 graduate of Mary Washington University in Virginia, was past President of the SEARCH club. She was the Water Shed Ambassador for Monmouth County through Americorps after graduation from college and also worked at the Marine Science Labs at Sandy Hook before joining the Peace Corp, serving in West Africa.

Currently, the students are taught in classrooms made of corn stalks with dirt floors and desks that are in serious disrepair. In a country where it is not yet possible for every child to be educated due to schools being

inaccessible, the villagers are aware of how special their school is and how fortunate they are to be able to give their children an education from well trained educators. All they lack is a safe, clean, comfortable learning space. Although they do not have the financial resources to achieve this on their own, the community has pledged to contribute a considerable amount of materials and labor.

If you are interested, donations may be sent to the SEARCH Club, High School North, 63 Tindall Road, Middletown, NJ. Donation checks can be made out to *North Search Club*, with a reference to the school in Africa. Individuals can also go directly to www.peacecorps.gov, select *Volunteer Projects*, type in *Habeck* and donate online either by check or credit card. Donations are being accepted until December 15th.