

Superintendent's Update

Karen L. Bilbao, Superintendent of Schools

Welcome Back!

Full-day Kindergarten –Now Reality in Middletown Public Schools

This September marks a pivotal moment in the history of the Middletown School District as we offer full-day kindergarten to all our age eligible students in our twelve elementary schools. While our teaching staff did a very good job teaching the curriculum with only 2 and ½ hours of kindergarten a day, their time was often rushed to get through the curriculum. The extra time will benefit all and make for a much more relaxed and productive environment for our youngest students. When they enter first grade next year, the students will be able to benefit more from the IDEAL/LEADS literacy model due to the increased

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A new kindergarten classroom at Nut Swamp School, along with 22 others throughout the school district, were ready for students on the first day of school.

Middletown Prepares to Mitigate the Spread of H1N1 Flu

As you are probably aware, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has announced that H1N1 or Swine flu has reemerged in the United States and could be significant this flu season. Middletown's goal is to mitigate the spread of H1N1 and all flu within our school district, so our buildings remain open and our students are minimally impacted. To that end, we have undertaken a series of measures listed below:

- ◆ Our Health Officer, Kenneth Walls, continues to keep in constant contact with the local, state and federal health officials on the status of H1N1.
- ◆ Middletown's offer for our two high schools to serve as a distribution center for H1N1 vaccine has been accepted by the Middletown Department of Health, which is working in lockstep with the State Department of Health & Senior Services and the CDC. The vaccine is expected to be available sometime in October, at which time the vaccine and the additional medical personnel necessary to administer it will be made available to our district. Our nurses will assist with the **free** inoculation of all Middletown school age children and their care providers who **request** the vaccine. **More information on the vaccination procedure and vaccine request forms will be disseminated within the coming weeks.**
- ◆ Our nurses will be advising their principals and teachers on the signs of flu and flu prevention discussions with students.
- ◆ First period secondary teachers and all elementary classroom teachers will discuss flu preventative measures with students

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Athletic Seasons Passes Now on Sale!

NORTH

High School sports fans can now purchase a season pass to attend all High School football, basketball and wrestling home games. a value of over 25 games!

A single pass costs \$20 to admit one person. A family 4-pack can be purchased at a discount for \$40 and will admit up to 4 people (one adult and three children or two adults and two children). The tickets are valid for all HOME and non-tournament games at the school where purchased and at all North/South games.

Tickets must be purchased in person at the two high school main offices on the following dates:

Sept 8th and 9th from 2:30 to 5:30 pm
September 10th from 4:30 to 7:30 pm

Tickets can also be purchased at the first two home games.



Full Day Kindergarten continued

instructional time in kindergarten. This will translate into gains as these children move up through the educational levels.

We are exceptionally proud of all our staff who met the challenge to convert many spaces in the 12 buildings for our 23 additional kindergarten classrooms over the summer recess. The rooms came from a combination of special subject rooms (primarily computer labs and art and music rooms) as well as multi-age classrooms and some resource spaces. The latter have significantly decreased in necessity since our new educational delivery system focuses on bringing resources into the classroom, rather than pulling students out of their classroom. The former resource teachers now join our staff of co-teachers, most of whom have a desk within the classroom. Art teachers will be coming into the classroom where their projects align with “project based learning” that has so engaged our children’s interest and fostered a love of learning.

All the new spaces were ready for the first day of school with the exception of one permanent wall that required Department of Education (DOE) approval. DOE approval requires a minimum of 90 days. However, we were able to put up partitions in that learning space which should allow the two kindergartens to function well until the approval is received.

We have capped the classroom size at 24 and each classroom is staffed by a kindergarten teacher assisted by a paraprofessional. We were also successful in keeping our new kindergartners at their home schools.

For years, our parents and teachers pleaded with us to provide a full-day kindergarten program that the vast majority of Monmouth County schools already offered. Space and financing were always the major obstacles. This year, however, the stars aligned as the utilization of ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) and the repositioning of existing staff throughout the school district, enabled us to bring full day kindergarten to Middletown without any additional cost to the taxpayer. We are very excited about this major accomplishment.

H1N1 flu preparation continued

and will be observing for signs of flu early in the day. Any children determined to be sick will be sent home by the school nurse.

- ◆ Informational signage will be distributed throughout the school buildings and age-appropriate materials will be given to students on flu prevention.
- ◆ Our school buildings will be additionally sanitized **every** night (after regular cleaning) with a bleach solution to kill germs on all exposed surfaces—door knobs, railings, floors, desks, etc...-- throughout the flu season.
- ◆ The district will be placing hand sanitizer supplies throughout the school buildings.



Lincroft School's nurse reinforces frequent hand-washing practice with students to minimize the spread of H1N1 flu.

While Middletown is being proactive to prevent the spread of H1N1, every parent and guardian’s help is essential in keeping their children healthy and avoiding a serious outbreak. Here is what you can do:

- Remind your children to **wash their hands frequently**. Set an example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children not to share personal items like drinks and food.
- Please instruct your children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and to properly discard the tissue, and then wash their hands. If they do not have a tissue, they should use their sleeve, **not** their hands.
- Know the signs and symptoms of flu—fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, cough or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose. Body aches, headache and fatigue may be symptoms as well as vomiting and diarrhea.
- Keep sick children at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever.

We will continue to keep you informed of any new developments through school notices and the district website at www.middletownk12.org.

Working together we can come through this impending flu season with a minimal of disruption to our children’s education while ensuring their good health.

Thank you for your cooperation.

District Close to Hiring a New Asst. Superintendent

Over the summer months, the Middletown Board of Education has been interviewing candidates for the important position of Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum. Working with the search firm Leadership Advantage, we have narrowed the field to several excellent candidates who would bring to the district expertise, energy and enthusiasm to implement a new vision and curriculum for our high schools. We expect to fill that position within the next few weeks.

For more information on H1N1 visit

www.flu.gov or www.state.nj.us/health/flu/h1n1.shtml