

WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOLS

WDHS Looking to Score an A Plus

This past June, several WDHS Advanced Placement Teachers, along with representatives of the WDHS Administration, attended an AP Conference presented by a team of educators from West Leyden High School in Chicago. After attending this exciting conference, the WDHS team was inspired to build a stronger support system for our students and staff who are challenged daily with the rigors of what an AP workload encompasses. In both July and early September, before the school year began, the WDHS AP Team collaborated on some ideas asking ourselves how to improve upon our overall AP culture in our school and community at large so as to bring attention and pride to how hard our students and staff alike work in these courses.



Our first effort in building this culture was the purchase of lawn signs for all of our 2019 Spring test takers who passed their respective AP exams. The lawn signs read: “WDHS Congratulates this student who scored a 3, 4, or 5 on a 2019 AP Exam!” Several High School AP teachers volunteered to hand deliver these lawn signs to all of the students and their families personally one Thursday afternoon after school ended. It was a thoughtful and sentimental touch to reiterate how proud the WDHS faculty is of its’ students. In addition, our WDHS team purchased AP stickers and personally signed a welcome back letter of recognition for all of our incoming ‘19-20 AP students in an effort to recognize each students’ willingness to challenge themselves academically. Our overarching goal is to have the students not only feel recognized and appreciated, but also supported in these demanding courses.

Throughout the ‘19-20 school year, the WDHS AP Team has more plans in store for this group of students. At or around the end of each quarter, we will host an AP Student Breakfast to remind the students of the importance of taking breathers and to always nourish their minds/bodies. We will also be investing time during lunch periods to outreach with both current and potential AP students to offer academic/emotional support, recognition, and to answer any questions about coursework. WDHS will offer our current AP students an opportunity to take a “practice test” during our April testing calendar window and we are looking at options to host a dinner/movie night for all of our AP students to kick off AP testing in May. These are just a few of the developments WDHS is considering to celebrate and recognize our AP student body. The WDHS AP Team is committed to this focus and will continue meeting

throughout the year to recommend more enhancements. The possibility of AP test reimbursement and final exam exemptions will be part of these discussions as well. Stay tuned to WDHS for more!

WDMS Eagle Launch

On Wednesday, September 11th, positive behavior took flight and soared at the West Deptford Middle School’s Sixth Annual Eagle Launch. The school-wide event promoted the Middle School’s Positive Behavior Support in Schools (PBSIS) program, which emphasizes the pillars of character: respect, gratitude, caring, responsibility, fairness, citizenship, trustworthiness and sportsmanship. To capture and reinforce these characteristics, the students and staff at WDMS participated in an entire day’s worth of exciting activities that reinforce the program’s missions.

Students were engaged in a variety of events that align with the school’s PBSIS mission. Such activities include three Character Education lessons facilitated by the teaching staff. Students watched a moving speech by Dr. Rick Rigsby titled [“The Wisdom of a Third Grade Dropout”](#) which promotes students to reflect on their life and to ask themselves: “How am I living?”. Students also practiced mindfulness while learning breathing exercises and discussed the importance of gratitude while contributing to their new class gratitude jar. Students were also provided with the opportunity to participate in an interactive activity that promoted interdependence, working cooperatively, positive communication and relationship building, while also overviewing the PBSIS expectations.

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In addition, all students contributed to the creation of our new mural, “Change the Tide, Welcome to our School,” which is located at the front entrance. This ocean-themed mural includes a colorful school of fish which welcomes students and visitors when entering the lobby of the school. Each student had the opportunity to leave their mark on the walls of WDMS as they used their fingertips to create the colorful scales of the fish. Furthermore, the students built on their teamwork and leadership abilities during the various station activities led by members of The West Deptford Police Department. Such activities included the Tarp Challenge, Rock Paper Scissor Hula-Hoop Race and Bull-Ring Challenge. Each activity set the tone and laid the foundation in modeling character attributes among our students and staff!



A New Preschool Adventure at Green-Fields

After months of preparation...and anticipation, Green-Fields Elementary School has embarked on a most epic adventure. Our first full year of full-day Preschool education is underway and we're off to an excellent start! Six new classrooms of enthusiastic and eager children have adjusted remarkably well to their new daily environment and are enjoying the measured independence that comes with a full school day.

Nonetheless, adapting to a new daily structure that adults sometimes take for granted is not easy for a four-year-old. That said, here is a small list of challenges that our young friends have overcome in a relatively short amount of time...early wake-ups, bus rides, a large building with over five-hundred students, co-existing with 3rd and 4th grade children, a six-and-a-half-hour daily schedule, lunch, recess... all combined with a highly-structured academic program throughout the day. There certainly is a lot to know, learn and experience in this new world. Yet, our youngest students have adapted well and are ready for what is still to come in the long school year.

Of course, our success early in the year is a direct result of the exhaustive work put forth by our fantastic Preschool teachers, our wonderful Instructional Aides, our Master Teacher Mrs. Cross and a top-notch Administrative staff that has successfully navigated the multiple-state requirements of an early childhood program. In addition, many of our 3rd and 4th grade students have taken on the helpful responsibility of acting as big "sisters" and "brothers" to our youngest children. Finally, we're grateful for our parents who have trusted us to prepare their children for the rigors of the daily school environment. We thank you for your help with this new adventure.

What's on the Preschool agenda for today? It's outdoor arrival, morning greetings, large group instruction, outside play, lunch, rest time ...and the busy day continues!



Students in Mrs. Newshel's class begin their day with a book!

Oakview Focused on Social/Emotional Learning



One of our School Goals for the 2019-20 school year focuses on the social/emotional well-being of our students and staff. We want to be intentional in making sure all students are excited to come to school feeling safe and loved. We also want to provide our staff with the best supports each day so they can be at their best for our students. As you know, the school year can be extremely hectic and stressful for everyone. This year, we will be paying close attention to the social and emotional component of the learning process and how it influences our school community.

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Each day, teachers will be implementing “morning meetings” to build positive relationships within their classroom, help students feel welcomed and valued and learn how to manage their emotions appropriately. We fully acknowledge that every opportunity we have to affect student learning matters and can make a difference in a child’s day. From various morning greetings (i.e- high five, fist bump, hug, etc.) when students enter the building/classrooms, to monitoring each part of their day so we can provide them with the necessary tools to cope with everyday challenges, we are committed to our students’ SEL success. Our school motto we adopted last year of “Every Student. Every Day. Whatever It Takes.” is truly something we take tremendous pride in at Oakview. Early childhood education is the foundation for learning and we are excited to emphasize the importance of SEL with our youngest students this year!

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. At Oakview, we will be working diligently to continue to infuse our mantra as a part of our school culture. This mantra, known as S.O.A.R., will be embedded in our daily routines and the expectations of our staff, students and school community. We will attempt to SOAR higher by demonstrating the following actions: **S**-trive to be your best, **O**-wn your actions, **A**-lways work together, & **R**-espect yourself and others.



Chromebooks Invade Red Bank

The students at Red Bank have a lot to be excited about this school year. Not only were they given the opportunity to experience a new building and make many new friends, but they also received their very own school-issued Chromebook. Thanks to the hard work of the Technology Department and the commitment of the Board of Education, our second-graders are about to begin a new adventure.

The 1:1 laptop initiative that has been so successful throughout our District for many years has expanded to include all students 2nd grade and up. The teachers are very excited to implement the technology in their instruction as well. For the first time in a long while, teachers and students will be learners, explorers and discoverers together. One teacher explained to her class that they were all being risk-takers, and it is often through their mistakes that they learn the best lessons. The teachers are amazing role models for what a growth mindset is all about.



All students have been introduced to Google Classroom, and it is being used in many innovative ways. Most years begin with an All-About-Me activity, but this year students created a Google Slide presentation to share with new friends. The best part is sharing presentations remotely with other classrooms. Our students are beginning to appreciate what global learning is all about and that the world really is getting smaller. The Chromebooks have also become an integral component of our Writers Workshop. As students write their “small moments,” the first step in our Narrative writing unit, classmates are adding comments and peer edits to improve the written piece. Peer assessment is such a valuable part of our learning, and our Chromebooks just made it easier AND much more fun.

We are sure the learning is going to only get better as Red Bank students become more and more confident in using technology as an educational tool. The Chromebooks in the classroom are going to truly bring the 4 C's of innovation, Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity to the forefront of our students' educational journey.



West Deptford Schools Welcome New Staff Members



*New Administrators - Pictured Left to Right:
Dr. Kimberly Seifring
(Director of Special Education & Related Services),
Mrs. Katelyn Donocoff
(Middle School Assistant Principal for Discipline & Attendance),
Ms. Jennifer Gilman
(Elementary Assistant Principal)*



*Amber Holden
(Oakview Kindergarten Teacher)*

Appointment of New Superintendent

The West Deptford Board of Education is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Gregory Cappello as the new Superintendent of Schools, replacing Mr. Steven Crispin who will be retiring effective October 31, 2019. The Board is proud of the hard-earned reputation that has been established by our District and they are confident that Mr. Cappello has the experience and background to lead the West Deptford School District to greater accomplishments and achievements.

Mr. Cappello has been an educator for more than 20 years. After graduating from Rowan University, he started his career in education as a High School English teacher in the Vineland Public School District. He then moved on to Shawnee High School teaching Computer Repair, Networking, Woodshop, Technology and TV Technology. After graduating with a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Rowan University and a Master's Degree in Education Leadership, and a law degree from Rutgers University, Mr. Cappello began his career as an Administrator. Greg served at the Camden County Technical Schools as an Athletic Director, Assistant Principal and Principal.



His career highlights include creating award-winning programs designed to help at-risk students take responsibility for their future. The first program that Greg helped create was the Martial Arts Character Program at Penn Tech in Pennsauken, New Jersey. That program was designed to teach students non-violent conflict resolution through mindfulness and respect. The program won a Promising Practice from Character.org. Another program that Mr. Cappello created that won a Promising Practice was the Student Improvement Group. That program was created to help at-risk students take responsibility for their learning and look at the world in a different way to ensure success. The students met in groups once a month to discuss topics that would help bring out the best in students with very difficult lives. The data showed that students involved in their group overwhelmingly improved in attendance, grades and reduced discipline referrals.

A lifelong believer in Career and Technical Education, Greg created the Camden County Technical Schools Technology Challenge. That program brought together teams of Middle School students to compete in highly technical design, build and compete programs. Student teams followed the design process to construct and test hotdog launchers and egg crates in a high-energy environment with music and an Elvis impersonator for a fun and memorable educational experience.

Mr. Cappello left Camden County Technical Schools to become an Assistant Superintendent at the Monroe Township School District. With much personnel shuffling at Monroe, Greg was the Acting Superintendent, Director of Maintenance, Director of Technology and Personnel Director all at the same time. Luckily, that only lasted for a couple of months. As Assistant Superintendent, Greg started the Equity/Diversity Committee, brought the Town Council together with the School District for shared services in Technology and implemented various safety/security and technology projects District-wide.

Greg is the father of four children with his wife Marianne, who works for the New Jersey State Department of Education. Greg maintains his status as an Attorney in New Jersey, specializing in Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying issues in schools. Mr. Cappello continues to train in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, MMA and karate as much as possible.

Mr. Cappello had this to say about joining West Deptford: "West Deptford is a close-knit community with a reputation of going the extra mile for students. I am very excited and humbled to be a part of this outstanding school District and I look forward to working to continue this standard of excellence that the West Deptford Schools are known for."

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LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER



Preschool students in Miss Drank's class at Red Bank Elementary left on their first day with all smiles. West Deptford School District was awarded the Preschool Expansion grant from the New Jersey Department of Education in January of 2019.



This summer West Deptford School District was designated as a Lighthouse District by the New Jersey Department of Education for substantial improvement in academic achievement. Pictured here are District leaders along with representatives from the New Jersey Department of Education, State Board of Education, and local elected officials.