



# **Bordentown Regional School District**

## **The Bordentown Bulletin**

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Visit us on the web at [www.bordentown.k12.nj.us](http://www.bordentown.k12.nj.us)

### **Superintendent's Office**

**Dr. Edward J. Forsthoffer III**

Happy New Year! It is my pleasure to introduce the inaugural issue of the Bordentown Regional School District's electronic newsletter, *The Bordentown Bulletin*. One of my goals, since arriving, has been to increase communication with our families and residents. This newsletter will highlight a story from each of our five schools as well as a few other articles that I believe you will find interesting. It will appear on our website so that anyone in the community may read it and learn about some of the great things we are doing. We will attempt to send the newsletter out monthly so please watch your email boxes each month for a link to the newest edition.

If you are a parent, when you read the newsletter you may already be aware of the information in the article from the principal where your child attends. However, please take a few moments to look through all of the articles so that you will have a better understanding of what is occurring across the district.

Two areas that I want to quickly address, from a district perspective, are strategic planning and the annual budget. I have been working with approximately 100 parents, residents, students, board members, and staff members toward developing a district wide strategic plan that will help us chart our course over the next several years. The group has already completed some components and we are now working on addressing areas of focus and developing a systematic plan to achieve our goals. My hope is to have the process completed and approved by the school board by the end of the school year. This plan will help us in deciding where to focus our resources.

With respect to resources, we are already working on the school budget, which will go into effect in July. Over the next several months I will include information related to the budget so that all of our residents are more informed. Information will also be available through our website at [www.Bordentown.k12.nj.us](http://www.Bordentown.k12.nj.us). Please visit this site often as it will provide the most current and up to date information. It is also easy to navigate to each of our school websites from this page.

My hope for all of you is a prosperous and healthy new year and I look forward to working with you throughout the school year.

#### **Administration**

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## *Technology is Everywhere*



Our society has progressed to the point where technology is intricately woven into the daily fabric of our lives. As can be imagined, this has produced quite a few varied reactions throughout our schools (both in Bordentown and across the country). What started in education as an effort to keep technology from being a distraction through bans on cell phones in schools and highly limited uses of school-owned computers has morphed into policy setting that not only allows, but also encourages, students to bring and use their cell phones and other devices as an integral part of classroom instruction.

To this end, the district welcomed an internationally-known speaker, Alan November, on the topic of technology in education at our teacher professional development day in October. Throughout his presentation, Mr. November provided glimpses of society's future as it pertains to technology and challenged educators to embrace the use of technology as more than a "\$1000 pencil" (as Mr. November often refers to traditional computer use in schools). In doing so, Mr. November called on educators to create learning experiences that provide students with opportunities to harness the vast amounts of information at their disposal and construct meaningful products in school, and, possibly, share their work beyond the confines of the classroom or school building.

Since Mr. November's presentation, Bordentown's educators have continued to develop ways to maximize the use of technology to ignite students' passion to learn and bolster their academic achievement. Through the use of expanded wireless bandwidth and district-supplied Chromebooks, computers, laptops, iPads, and student-owned devices (such as smart-phones), students in BRSD schools continue to be engaged in educational endeavors to prepare them for a technological world.

## *Family Learning Series*

Our **Family Learning Series** is back again this year to provide parents and guardians with strategies and tips to support their young learners at home. Research has shown that parent involvement can increase school achievement, improve school attendance and help with essential social skills. Please consider joining us for some very informative and hands on evenings designed to share instructional program information and practices that your children are using this year!

In October we kicked off our family nights with a presentation titled, **Using Online Resources With Your Child at Home** to provide families with information regarding the online resources that students have access to this school year. Participants navigated the Everyday Math site using their child's login and password to see how this tool can be helpful with playing math games at home and in supporting their child academically using the resources on the site. The Keyboarding Without Tears program, used in grades K-4 was also discussed. In December we held our 2<sup>nd</sup> family night, **Give the Gift of Reading**. During this presentation, families learned ways to support and encourage their readers at home in conjunction with the readers' workshop model that teachers in grades K-5 are currently using as part of our literacy instruction. Strategies for helping children figure out "tricky" words and comprehension tips were shared. There were many "take-aways" from the evening's activities including tools to help promote discussion about books with your child and every child who attended received their own bag of books.

Our upcoming workshop is titled, **Math: It's All Fun and Games** and will be held on Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 in the Peter Muschal All-Purpose Room. This evening's events will teach parents some of the math games from our Everyday Math program to help support children at home with foundational math skills and math concepts. Parents are encouraged to bring their children with them to this particular evening. Registration can be completed online using the following link: <http://goo.gl/forms/GL4scd2dql>.

## Look what's happening at BRHS!



With the New Year comes plenty of excitement and accomplishment at Bordentown Regional High School. In addition to our students beginning their scheduling for next school year and the PARCC testing that everyone so enjoys, our students are shining bright with an outstanding amount of individual achievements. Check out some of the awesome stories below and be sure to pay close attention to the plans for the future.

### Recent Scottie Accomplishments:

- The BRHS Marching Scotties captured four first place trophies this past season and finished 4<sup>th</sup> at the National Competition!
- Esha Talur and Alicia Method auditioned for and were selected to the All South Jersey Symphony Orchestra!
- Danielle Schenck, BRHS's reigning Homecoming Queen, was chosen through America's Homecoming Queens National Pageant Registry to participate in this year's 57th Annual Liberty Bowl Football Classic game and bowl week events in Memphis, Tennessee. Only a small percentage of Homecoming Queens were invited to attend.
- Scott Price was recently named Mr. Bordentown at our annual pageant. Scott sang his way into the hearts of the judges and pulled out a very tight win over some of the best competition in years. The BRHS Student Council raised over \$3,000 for their adopted charity, *Hope Loves Company*.

### Upcoming BRHS Events:

- Course scheduling for the 2016-17 School Year begins! On January 12, the BRHS counselors began scheduling the upperclassmen for next school year. Beginning with the juniors, the students will choose their courses and plan for the future.
- The 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade Open House will occur at BRHS on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. All parents/guardians and current 8<sup>th</sup> graders are invited and encouraged to attend.
- The BRHS Principal Advisory Committee has their next meeting on Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The end of Semester 1 is near. BRHS students are preparing to take final exams (Jan. 26 & 27) and start anew in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Time to hit the books hard!
- Speaking of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester – mark your calendar for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Back to School night – Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm.



Bordentown Regional Middle School students serve the community during the holiday season! The middle school student council, IMPACT and Team FAD (Fight Against Drugs) club members were actively involved in community service during the past couple of months bringing goodwill to many residents in Burlington County and the Bordentown community. This holiday season found middle school students spending quality time with senior citizens, assisting Peter Muschal Elementary students and collecting toys and winter garments for county and Bordentown residents of all ages. Through the guidance of middle school faculty and staff, Bordentown Regional Middle School students learn at a relatively young age that the value of community service and gift giving can come in all forms; kindness, love, friendship, sharing a meal or a helping hand, and of course giving gifts during the holidays.



During the month of December, the BRMS Student Council adopted a women's shelter, also known as "WomanSpace" to serve and pass along the holiday spirit. WomanSpace is an organization that provides women and children of abuse, a safe haven. The organization also assists the women in finding employment and education job opportunities, safety, and care during difficult times. This year student council members exceeded donation expectations of toys, supplies, as well as, a monetary donation for the WomanSpace Christmas celebration. Mrs. Ridolfi, the student council advisor said, "Making a difference is a valuable tool to teach each other. This year, the BRMS Student Council made a difference!"

On Saturday, December 5th, the IMPACT club members volunteered their time to help Peter Muschal Elementary School students pick out holiday gifts for their parents/guardians. The students proved to be very capable Santa's helpers to the elementary school students. Also, on Wednesday, December 16th club members, under the direction of club co-advisors, Ms. Rabenda, a 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, and Ms. Patterson, middle school guidance counselor, offered their time to serve local seniors during the Christmas season. The students served dinner to the community senior citizens, shared tea, sang Christmas carols, played games and made holiday crafts. The well planned Intergenerational Holiday Tea proved to be an uplifting event for all involved!

Also, during this holiday season, Team FAD club members, guided by Mrs. Molnar and Mrs. Voshell, both middle school math teachers, organized a Toys for Tots donation, a winter coat drive, and a food drive to help local residents in need. The winter coat drive and food drive were both large successes, helping families within our community obtain the necessary items needed to stay warm this winter and help them purchase food for a family holiday meal. Through the Toys for Tots program Team FAD members donated an outstanding amount of toys to brighten several children's holiday. "Students at BRMS are always looking for ways to help those in need and strengthen the bridge between our school and community" said Mrs. Molnar.

It is a pleasure to watch our middle school students offer their time and extend consideration and goodwill to make the holiday season a special and merry one for those of their community.





What do our students need to get jobs and be productive members of society? They need to be good researchers, have collaboration skills, be critical thinkers and be self-directed. But what do they need to foster a true love of learning and development of individual talents that might otherwise be overlooked? They need exposure to the world beyond our community and the chance to broaden their personal experience. Seamless integration of technology in research-based projects that are student-directed will open those doors for our students. Technology will help make learning more rigorous and motivating.

MacFarland Intermediate continues to expand their learning beyond the walls of the school. Mrs. Esposito, our media specialist, has taken on many new initiatives to push the walls of the school beyond our community. Our students have participated in mystery skypes from Colorado, Indiana, Iowa and Virginia, where they connected with students from across the country.

Our 4<sup>th</sup> graders learned about Adelie Penguins with face to face skyping all the way from Antarctica Research Center. This virtual field trip allowed them to visit a penguin breeding colony. Today, a penguin flag flies in Royds, Antarctica that was created by 4<sup>th</sup> graders at MIS.

Our goals with technology are to:

- Educate students on practical use of the World Wide Web, including discerning information sources and utilizing available research tools
- Provide for student-centered learning through independent projects
- Encourage deeper research into individual talents and personal interest
- Incorporate numerous curricular areas into a single research-based project
- Develop a peer audience for student work
- Engender a greater regard for diversity through cultural exploration
- Excite and motivate students to explore the world beyond their community

Global Learning can transform their trip to one of safety and satisfaction that will lead them into the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century with success. We are looking forward to the upcoming events scheduled for our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders outside the walls of MIS.



The Faculty, Staff, and Students of Clara Barton School would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year, 2016! As we completed 2015 we were fortunate to be able to travel to the Bordentown Old City Hall train display as well as to Bordentown Regional High School to see a winter musical program. In this article we are sharing some information regarding our character education program as well as curricular updates from our kindergarten and first grade.



Our focus on character education is a priority and our goal is that every student is member of our community. Each morning, during AM Announcements, students hear and respond to "Words of Wisdom" by Project Wisdom. Classes begin their day with a Morning Meeting to ensure all students are ready for the day's activities. Students are greeted by the teacher and fellow classmates followed by participation in a team-building activity and listening to classroom News and Announcements for the day.

For the past six years, CBS has employed a school wide Character Education program based upon the theme of Unity. Twenty six words of character are emphasized by teachers on a daily basis and once per month, students gather together by grade level to celebrate classmates who have successfully demonstrated the ability to embody all 26 words as part of the CBS community or they have shown improvement targeting specific Unity words. Our main goal is to recognize all students for their efforts by the end of the school year. January begins our ceremonies where we have monthly grade level meetings to celebrate students who have achieved their character education goals. We also have added "Clara chips" where students are recognized and encouraged for small behaviors in their classrooms which add to our Unity pillars. These chips are placed in grade level based jars in the cafeteria where grade levels work towards a goal such as extra recess or an assembly. The second grade has already earned an extra recess this school year! We also employ "Caught Being Good" when we feel students are showing citizenship through living their Unity words; students are recognized for this achievement in the lunch period where two grade levels are present to shout encouragement.

Clara Barton has also participated in many extra-curricular opportunities where the generosity of our students, staff and families was shown to the greater community. We have participated in a food drive spearheaded by the BRHS Theatre Club and have worked to make the holiday season stronger for families through both meal and gift donations. Two first time events this year were the collection of almost 300 Used Eyeglasses for New Eyes for the Needy as well as making the season brighter for patients and their families through donations of almost 400 gifts to The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

In the curricular area our focus for this school year is improving our reading through launching the Columbia University Lucy Calkins Reader's Workshop model. We are in our second year of adoption of the Columbia University Lucy Calkins Writer's Workshop. In mathematics our regular instruction is based on the Chicago Math program, "Everyday Mathematics" which provides a spiraling mathematics curriculum from year to year.

Our kindergarteners have been quite busy. Last month they attended the wedding celebration for Ms. Q. and Mr. U. as they became Mr. and Mrs. QU – and even attended the reception! Kindergarteners recently shared favorite stories with an attentive audience of stuffed bears from home. They have been working on correct numeral formation focusing on numbers 0-10. They are looking forward to letter sounds and applying sight words in reading workshop with non-fiction. They will work on "how to" writing and "all about water" in science. Math lessons will focus on using parts to create wholes. At the end of the month, the students will read about the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King. Our CBS Unity Words will be related to many lessons involving Dr. King. We look forward to seeing who will receive their unity links at the kindergarteners' very first grade level linking ceremony!

Our first graders have been working hard! In math, students focused on addition and subtraction strategies and began practicing measurement. In Social Studies we traveled to different countries to learn about their holiday traditions. In reading, students enjoyed studying nonfiction books and in writing, students experienced the writing process from start to finish by writing How-To books! First grade will be settling into the New Year by making resolutions for 2016. In reading, we will begin a character analysis unit. In math, the students will begin studying and making graphs and tally charts. In social studies we will learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. First graders are looking forward to science this year. We will begin our Matter Unit in science, and conduct several experiments on solids, liquids, and gases.

We'll share news about grades 2 and 3 in the next communication! Clara Barton Elementary is now on Twitter. Follow us for up to date news, announcements, and events @ClaraBartonES

## **Character Counts at PMES !**

In recent years, educators have spent a great deal of time and effort on curricular goals in the areas of reading, language arts, and math. As students continue to make great strides in these areas, pursuits such as character education and fostering the elements of a positive school climate and culture often have taken a back seat. Fortunately, this has never been the case in BRSD, and character education continues to thrive across the district!



The students at Peter Muschal Elementary School spent the month of December filling buckets with words and deeds exemplifying good character. In a contest started by Mr. Riether and Mrs. Blue, each class received a bucket to be displayed in the school cafeteria. Each time students were observed working together as a class to display good character, they were awarded a sticker. When the school returned from winter break, stickers were counted and the class with the highest total in each grade was treated to a free extra recess period compliments of the Principal and Assistant Principal. PMES faculty and staff helped monitor the students' behavior and played an integral role in recommending classes to earn their stickers. Walking quietly in the hallways, listening to teachers' and aides directions, using kind words and actions etc. were all ways classrooms could work together in order to fill their buckets. This incentive program was based on the book Have You Filled a Bucket Today by Carol McCloud and also on the schoolwide UNITY program. Blending the two together enabled the students to cultivate a positive climate within the building while at the same time monitoring and improving their behaviors. The first round of the contest proved to be very successful. Students were highly motivated and worked as class teams to make positive character and behavioral choices. The following classes earning the highest amount of stickers in their respective grade levels: **Kindergarten**, Ms. Brandimarto, **1<sup>st</sup> Grade**, Mrs. Benson, **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**, Mrs. Lettiere and **3<sup>rd</sup> grade**, Mrs. Bacovin.

Teachers were provided with valuable feedback to assist in facilitating classroom discussion. The contest also provided the students with a positive incentive while at the same time offering administrators, faculty and staff insight into how classroom communities functioned within the building. Based on data collected, all stakeholders will be working on sustaining the positive climate and student behavior within the building. After seeing the enthusiasm generated during the first round, Mrs. Blue and Mr. Riether hope to capitalize on the success of this program in the months to come!



## This Month

January 15 – Staff In-Service – No school for all students

January 18 – Martin Luther King, Jr – SCHOOL CLOSED

January 20 – Board of Education Meeting

## Next Month

February 3 – Board of Education Meeting

February 15 – President's Day – SCHOOL CLOSED

February 17 – Board of Education Meeting



*"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."*

[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

*Thank you for checking in with The Bordentown Bulletin!*