

Superintendent's December Report Orange Public Schools “Good to Great”



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Superintendent of Schools
“The Teaching Superintendent”
December 10, 2019

Civics Day

November 26, 2019

- The Orange Township Public School District participated in Civics Day for students in Grades 7-12 on Tuesday, November 26, 2019.
- In the Civics Day classes, students learned what it meant to be an engaged citizen in their local community, how to work with others on community issues, and what components help create a good solution.
- **Objectives**
- Students will be able to:
 - Think critically about solving community issues in their own community
 - Understand their role as citizens in our democracy beyond voting
 - Work collaboratively in groups to discuss solutions
 - Analyze solutions that have been tested successful

Pictures from Civics Day 2019



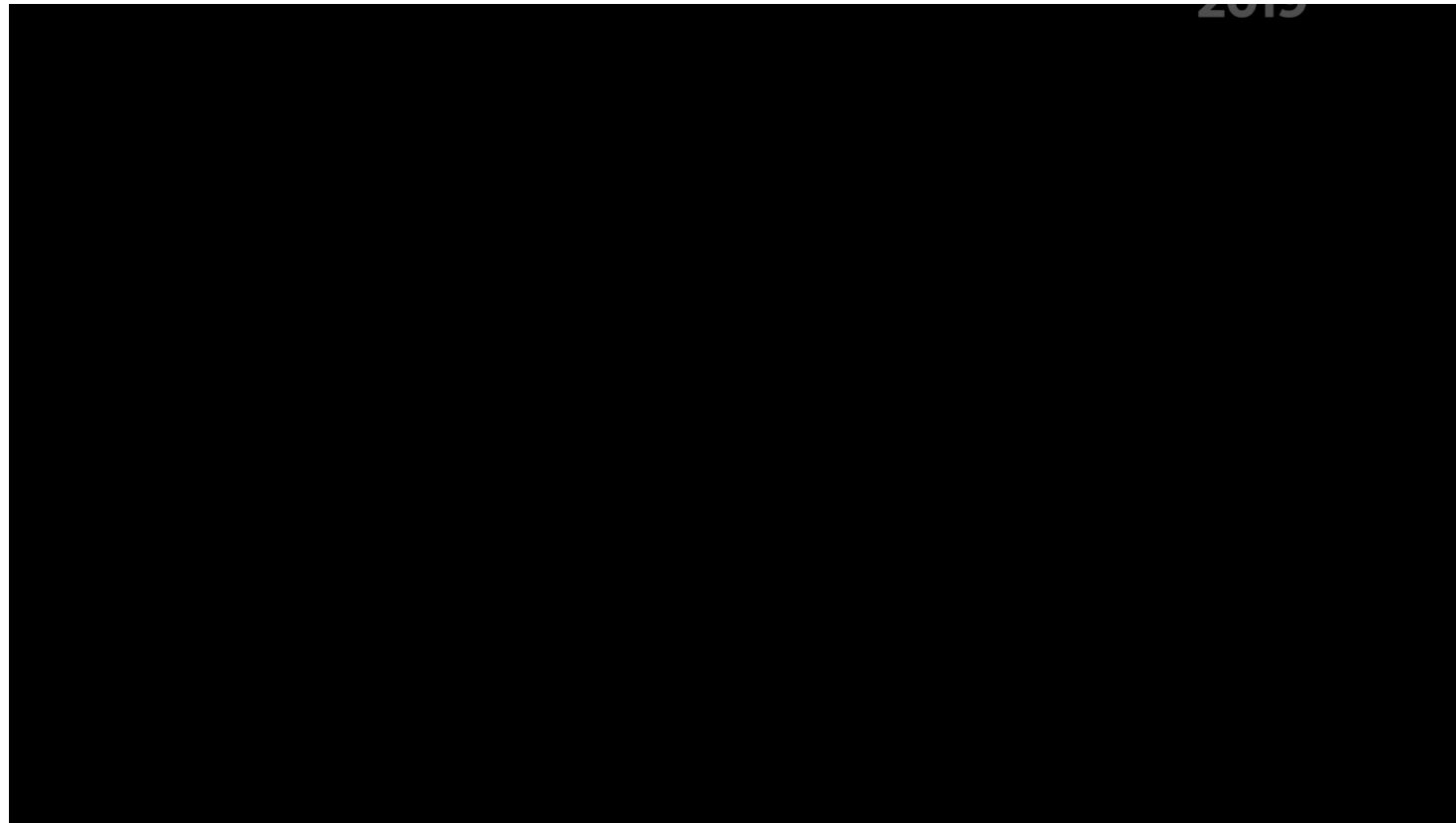
1st Student Recognition Program
for SY 19-20
November 26, 2019

- The program began with opening remarks as well as the Pledge of Allegiance.
- In Orange Township fashion, we had the Mighty Marching Tornadoes as well as the Rosa Parks Community School perform.
- There were three major presentations: the October Student of the Month, the Perfect Score on the English Language Arts Section of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)-we had eight students that accomplished that honor, and finally the students that scored between 825 and 849 on the NJSLA in ELA and Mathematics.

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- Each month, we will have presentations from our students as well as accolades from our schools. After the short film highlighting the first recognition program, we will share the upcoming dates for you.
- Parental and staff attendance was well received on the evening of November 26th. The energy in the room was infectious. I implore you to attend in December through June 2020.

1st Student Recognition Program
for SY 19-20
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Reminder: Student Recognition Program

- I am pleased to remind families of the the following dates for the performance and student recognition program for SY 19-20 beginning at 6:30 PM in the Orange Preparatory Academy Auditorium. We will continue to make phone calls to families as well as send a personalized letter as well from the Office of the Superintendent.
- Monday, December 16th
- Tuesday, January 21st
- Tuesday, February 25th
- Tuesday, March 24th
- Tuesday, April 21st
- Tuesday, May 19th
- Tuesday, June 16th

Game of Tiaras

November 22nd and November 23rd

- Visual and Performing Arts is critical to the landscape of the district. Students must be able to express themselves in a myriad of situations.
- The Game of Tiaras took place on November 22nd and November 23rd. Overwhelmingly attended, when asked about the experience, audience goers stated that students were well poised, the suspense was evident throughout the performance, and students and staff MUST be commended for their craft.
- A study published by Abigail Todhunter-Reid of the Department of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University stated, “arts education (minutes per week of art and music instruction) positively predicted academic achievement and growth in reading and mathematics from kindergarten to 5th-grade. Moreover, the positive associations increased in strength as students progressed to later grades.” She is not alone in these findings, and in fact, many studies find similar results.

Game of Tiaras

November 22nd and November 23rd

- In music programs alone, students learn a variety of skills that help them in other areas. An article in the Washington Post on this states that music education can help to develop “a wide variety of different skills, including memory and spatial learning... language skills such as verbal memory, literacy and verbal intelligence.” This helps students to perform well in reading and mathematics courses, despite no direct instruction toward the subjects.
- Similarly, visual arts students learn to develop their spatial learning, organizational skills, visual memory, and emotional development. These students come to their other subjects more prepared, and able to see connections that other students may miss. The students also are allowed an opportunity to learn history through the study of other artists, which can aid them greatly in reading and composition courses. The study from Rutgers University found these effects grew more profound over time, with students who sustained the arts education improving more overall.

Game of Tiaras

November 22nd and November 23rd

- Performing arts like dance and theatre show some of the most profound impacts, as students who learn to perform learn valuable skills that help in classrooms and beyond. Public speaking, verbal skills, memorization, emotional intelligence, literacy, and so on, are all developed by reading and rehearsing a play. Students who have the opportunity to perform often feel a sense of accomplishment, which can motivate them to achieve elsewhere as well. Additionally, this provides a chance for physical engagement which, especially at an elementary level, can be hugely beneficial to students' focus in their classes.
- In total, allowing students the opportunity to develop as artists is better for them in many ways. Teachers can always endeavor to bring arts-based learning into a classroom, or simply allow for creative time. Parents can encourage artists to grow and explore, enroll students in extracurricular programs, or participate in arts with their children. Those who learn with the arts learn on many different levels. They will go far, and achieve higher with the arts behind them.

Game of Tiara Performance Pictures



Dr. Fitzhugh Presented at the UCEA Conference on November 22nd and November 23rd

- As a measure to continually stretch my thinking as the “Teaching Superintendent,” I had the opportunity to present alongside my dissertation chair Dr. Christopher Tienken on the topic Shifting Sands of Higher Order Thinking in State Curriculum at the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Conference.
- This presentation and subsequent article will take a look at higher order thinking embedded within the state standards. In addition, it allowed me to take researchers into how to interpret the standards and what we are doing in the district to ensure that students are embarking on powerful learning experiences on a daily basis.

December's Instructional Focus

- Individualized Approaches to Teaching and Learning: What does this mean within our ecosystem?
- Teachers knowing exactly the strengths and challenges of each student and providing supporting accordingly. As shared with the administrators in Dr. Christopher Tienken' book *Defying Standardization*, the one size fits all model will not move the instructional needle.
- We want to also identify strengths and capitalize off of them as well. The focal point is consistently move students. Understanding the standards but most importantly the skills that are embedded within the standards.

Walk Throughs

What is the Idea?

- The idea behind walk-throughs is that firsthand classroom observations can paint a picture to inform improvement efforts. These observations typically involve looking at how well teachers are implementing a particular program or set of practices that the district or school has adopted. For example, a school principal might want to know whether teachers are able to put into practice their recent training on quick-writes and pair-shares.
- In theory, before visiting classrooms, observers decide what they will focus on, what evidence they will collect, and how they will make sense of it. Afterward, they report their findings formally or informally to one or more audiences.
- Walk-throughs are *not* intended to evaluate individual teachers or principals or even to identify them by name in post-observation reports. Rather, the goals of walk-throughs are to help administrators and teachers learn more about instruction and to identify what training and support teachers need.

Walk Throughs and the Purpose

- Schools are conducting walk throughs weekly which will account for that number to increase positively.
- The purpose of the walk throughs is to identify trends predicated on the needs academically. Common Planning and Professional Learning Communities will also be impacted as it relates to the walk through trend analysis. Meetings must have a purpose....
- Before launching any type of walkthrough process, it is important to ensure that everyone understands how it connects to improvement efforts. This connection should be reflected in the specific data that observers collect, the thoughtfulness and quality of the protocols, and the way the results are used.

Mathematics Extended Constructed Responses

- **Constructed response** can be defined as an assessment task that requires students to apply their knowledge and critical thinking skills to real-world problems. Often called open-ended questions, they require the student to **construct** and develop their own answer without the help of other suggestions or choices.
- Extended-response questions ask students to show their work in completing two or more tasks or a more extensive problem. Extended-response questions allow students to show their understanding of mathematical procedures, conceptual understanding, and application. Extended-response questions may also assess student reasoning and the ability to critique the arguments of others.

Mathematics Extended Constructed Responses in the Orange School District this School Year

- During the October 29th Professional Development sessions and thereafter, the district will begin releasing **Extended Constructed Response items (ECRs)** to all teachers of mathematics. These tasks are designed to address our students' ability to solve problems abstractly and quantitatively in support of the Standards for Mathematical Practice 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. As a district we've employed initiatives that emphasize problems solving such as the 5 Practices for Orchestrating Productive Mathematics Discussion, implementation of the TQE process, and the implementation of daily use of Mathematics Anchor Tasks and Content Routines. This school year, we are implementing monthly **Extended Constructed Response items (ECRs)** that provide rich problem solving experiences in timed NJSLA-like settings.

Mathematics Extended Constructed Responses in the Orange School District this School Year

- Reasoning and Modeling, as assessed on the NJSLA in Grades 3 – High School, engages students in problem solving experiences that call for the judging of reasonableness of numerical results, developing number sense and an understanding of numerical operations, communicating mathematical ideas and procedures, exploring the meaning and role of mathematical concepts, and applying mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics.
- The first ECR was released in October within all grades, with subsequent releases each month thereafter. These items are to be rubric scored, recorded in Genesis, and can be used in support of measuring SGO growth.

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