

Superintendent's Report Orange Board of Education September 13, 2011

The following is a report of the Superintendent of Schools for the September 13, 2011 Board of Education meeting:

District Highlights

- The Orange Public Schools opened the 2011-12 school year for students on Thursday, September 8, 2011. The district opened with three (3) new facility sites as follows:
 - The district opened a new Alternative High School Program at 123 Cleveland Street. The Alternative Program will include new programs to the district such as Culinary Arts and a Light Carpentry
 - The district has absorbed and taken over the preschool program formerly operated by the YWCA at 497 Park Ave. There will be approximately 120 preschoolers at this location.
 - The district has also leased the former Mt. Carmel school building. The district plans to use the site to either house a program for exceptionally gifted students or to address overcrowding within the district.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

• **2011 – 2012 Reading and Writing Focus:**

One of the district's focuses for the 2011 – 2012 school years will be on Literacy. The entire district will put forth efforts directed towards Reading and Writing across the Curriculum. Every class will hold students to high expectations in these areas. The district is asking that the entire Orange Community support this effort. The district will be instituting a 25 book read challenge. We are asking all parents to support their child in reading at least 25 books this school year. In addition parents, please ensure that students in grades K-4 reads at least 20 minutes per night, grades 4 -8 students read at least 30 minutes per night, and 9-12 grade students read at least 45 minutes per night over and above any homework assignments. A good practice is to take a book to bed. Finally, we are encouraging parents to take a great interest in their child's writing assignments. They need to know that you have an interest in their thoughts, expressions, opinions, and clarity of voice.

• **Push to a Paperless District:**

Parents please provide your child's school with an e-mail address. This will allow you to have access to the parents' portal as well as district information in a timely fashion. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact your child's school. (There are free email account opportunities).

CURRICULUM AND TESTING

- Curriculum training has begun in several disciplines to introduce teachers to the newly written curriculum guides. These guides are available on the Curriculum Department website. Orange School District curricula for Language Arts and Mathematics was aligned to both the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the Common Core State Standards and training is being planned
- A Portfolio Handbook has been presented to teachers as a guide for compilation and reflective analysis for student portfolios in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Faculty and administrators are in the process of having an in-depth review of the handbook with department staff.

TESTING

- The HSPA will be administered on October 4, 5, and 6, 2011. This administration is only for students who took the March, 2011 test and were not proficient in Language Arts and/or Mathematics. They will have one more opportunity to take the test in March, 2012 if they do not improve their scores in October.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- On September 6 and 7, all staff received two full days of training for programs initiated by the district. Some of the initiatives that were addressed include: EveryDay Math, portfolios, writing, curriculum mapping, Connected Math, CPO Science, Rubrics, Mimios, and Journeys Assessments. We are continuing to train staff on new software such as IObservation and OnCourse for lesson planning.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

- Physical inventories of all physics and science equipment/lab kits have been completed in all schools in the district. These verified inventories will be used to insure that all schools are equipped equitably with necessary materials needed to provide all students in the district with a robust learning experience in the sciences.
- OPA Science Department has completed the first training phase of a teacher partnership with the New Jersey Center for Teaching and Learning (NJCTL) and will offer the first year of Physics First to all ninth grade students. Physics First employs a rigorous curriculum designed to promote problem solving and critical thinking skills needed to prepare students for 21st Century challenges in an ever growing technology rich workforce. Four teachers have completed the initial one year of training and will administer classroom instruction to these classes.
- Weekly mini-benchmark assessments will be administered throughout the district for all Mathematics and Science classes, grades 3 through 12. The initial run of these assessments will take place in all OPA mathematics/science classes as part of the DO NOW 5-8 minute activities, followed by a district wide implementation beginning the third week of October. These assessments represent snap shots of student proficiency for selected strands of the NJCCCS and will provide teachers and administration with timely student data to be used to drive instruction.

- District wide Saturday Morning NJASK and HSPA Prep Classes are in the preliminary planning stages and are intended to extend the learning week for students with standardized test preparation classes. These classes have proved to be invaluable for raising state test scores and helping students with problem solving skills.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- **World Cultures (Social Studies and World Languages):** The department is working with the schools to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month (September 15- October 15). Each grade group is working on in-depth study projects to explore many facets of the Spanish speaking communities and countries. The final projects will be displayed in a culminating festival the end of October. Look for information about your child's participation from your home school.
- **Technology:** The district is making every effort for full participation for the Parent Portal in each school. Please fill out the registration form available at your child's school. This will enable us to open the portal on our web site for you to view your child's grades, attendance, discipline and teacher comments.
- **Rising Tide:** The district is hosting a partnership with *Rising Tide Community Capital*. This is a non-profit organization that works with individuals as entrepreneurs to start small businesses. Their success in Jersey City was recognized in a speech by President Obama and they were named as CNN Hero of the Month. We are proud to work together to offer this service to our community.
- **Community School:** The Central Campus Community School is continuing to flourish and grow. A new director and after school coordinator have been hired. After school, expanded learning will begin this month.

SPECIAL SERVICES

- **Vision SY 11-12**
 - Commit to increase and create better learning opportunities for ALL CHILDREN, ***PARTICURALLY*** those with ***LEARNING DIFFERENCES and CHALLENGES***
 - Challenge and broaden Orange Township Public Schools' inclusionary practices as to become commonplace and part of the social and global environment
 - Develop, adapt and/or expand Twenty-First Century Skill Sets to produce 21st Outcomes for both Students-At-Risk (SAR) and/or Students with Individualized Education Plans/Programs (IEP)
- **Mission SY 11-12**
 - To provide public school allied services to assist the students, parents, staff and community-at-large for the residents of the City of Orange Township
 - To propitiate both state and federal laws per Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regarding students with individualized education programs
- **Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying Bill of Rights Act**

- All Orange Township Public School Administrators, Psychologist, Social Workers, Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultants, Transition Coordinators, Nurses, Registrar, Attendance Counselors, Guidance Counselors and Speech-Language Specialists have revised mandatory trainings and student and parent handbook developed aligned with both District Policy and Student Code of Conduct.
- **Peanut-Free School**
 - Forest Street School has become the 1st Peanut-Free School Zone in the district. The school principal along with the Forest Street School Community and district staff members are partnering with the parents to bring awareness to this potentially life-threatening concern. You've all read the headlines and seen the news stories: food allergies are a growing concern in schools across America. Millions of children - children who are perfectly healthy and normal in every other way – must watch every single bite they eat, or risk suffering a severe or even life threatening reaction. In fact, food allergies claim an estimated 150 lives and are responsible for more than 125,000 emergency room visits each year. A major health issue such as this must be taken very seriously, and it has always been the policy of this Orange Township Public Schools District to make the safety and well-being of our students our top priority.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

Facilities:

- **Facility Committee Meeting was held on 9/12/2011 @ 2:30 PM**
- **District Walkthrough with SDA and DOE Officials:**

Yesterday, a walkthrough of the district facilities was conducted by officials of SDA and DOE to evaluate the district emergent Health and Safety needs. A summary report of the items evaluated include but limited to; the replacement of the Cleveland School boiler and smoke stack, OPA roof parapets, phase two of OHS HVAC renovation, air handling units at the old wings of Heywood Av School, Forest Street School, Oakwood School, Central School, and OPA,.
- **Upcoming/Ongoing Major Facility Renovation Projects:**
 - a. Construction of a Link between OHS and OPA, to include an elevator system that would provide ADA accessibility for both schools buildings
 - b. Renovation of the current OHS Home Economic room to a standard Culinary Arts Program
 - c. 123 Cleveland Lease and renovation project to house the Alternative School Program
 - d. 397 Park Av (YWCA) building lease to take over and operate an in-district Pre-K program
 - e. Lease of Mt. Carmel School Building to provide a district Learners Academy Program
- **Old Police Station Building 539 Lincoln Avenue:**

The district submitted to the City of Orange a (\$1) bid for the Old Police Station Building, the district received information that the bid has been rejected and no further

action will be required until the City has exhausted all other beneficial financial alternatives.

- **Orange High School (OHS) HVAC system upgrade and replacement**
The OHS HVAC system upgrade project is at 90% completion stage.
- **Orange Middle School (OMS)**
Mr. James received a correspondent from NJSDA that the project award has been forwarded to DOE for final approval after the entire revised document was received from Karen Nichols of KNTM architects.

Finance:

- The district received revised State aid revenue for the 2011-2012 school year budget, the Business Office is working with the Superintendent to revise the budget and make all necessary adjustments that would efficiently benefit the entire district student instructional needs.
- **ASBO Award:** For two years in a row, the Orange Public Schools has received the Association of School Business Official (**ASBO**) International Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting award, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2010. The Business Office staff thanks the various district departments and school administrators for their collaborative effort and support.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

- Prepared district website and star ledger ads for vacant positions.
- Interviewed candidates for vacancies and prepared agenda items for two Board Meetings in July and August and three Special Board Meetings in June and August resulting in 13 administrative appointments, 52 certificated appointments, 12 paraprofessional appointments, 2 consultant appointments, three re-assignments and 19 staff transfers.
- Met with all prospective candidates to negotiate salary and review district benefits and employment paperwork.
- Assisted in the preparation and presentation of the Substitute Orientation on August 26, 2011.
- Prepared the agenda and presented in the New Staff Orientation on August 29, 2011.
- Completed and submitted the District's Fall Report inclusive of student and staff data for the 2010-11 School Year.
- Responded to the Board Attorney's request to complete interrogatories for legal action against an employee recommended for Tenure Charges.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Open House – see attached