

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



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

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

• **OBOE- Mail Blast**

Commencing November 22nd and over the last couple of weeks there has been a distribution of the OBOE Mail Blast. The Blast is a culmination of activities and events that have occurred over that week as well as announcements of upcoming events. There are so many incredible achievements and activities occurring in the Orange Public Schools that is imperative that we start sharing and spreading the good news.

We want to ensure that you have weekly access to this incredible resource. Please make certain that you are a part of the district e-mail distribution list so that you receive the weekly update. You really don't want to miss a single issue.

• **Holiday Reading/25 Book Challenge**

When students read they build vocabulary, they build fluency, they increase knowledge, and they become stronger independent learners. Reading is the foundation of all learning skills. With this in mind we are asking parents over the holidays to share in the districts goal of moving toward each child reading 25 books this school year. This can be accomplished by ensuring that your child reads 20-30 uninterrupted minutes per day/night over the extended break. This well spent time would surely result in the completion of one to two chapter books depending upon size or the speed of your child's reading abilities. The benefits will be undeniable.

CURRICULUM AND TESTING

• **Professional Development**

A new Professional Development Committee has been formed and has been meeting weekly since October. An electronic survey was sent to all staff members asking for input regarding the next in-service workshop day, January 27, 2012. The data helped the PD Committee reformat the in-service to include workshops that target areas of concern or need. Many staff members will be able to choose two half day workshops of interest to them. The in-service will be organized through My Learning Plan. Some of the workshop titles are: Unpacking the Common Core Standards in Language Arts; OnCourse Training for lesson planning; and Writing Across the Curriculum among others.

- **Testing**

The first benchmark test for all grade levels has been administered in Math and Language Arts. The data has provided useful for the district, and school data teams. It is also being analyzed in Common Planning Time meetings with teachers and master teachers. By looking through several lenses, we are able to see patterns of areas that need to be addressed with targeted instructional strategies. The District Data Team has been working on planning instruction so that these areas are the focus.

- **Language Arts**

The Language Arts department has prepared grade level appropriate NJ ASK and HSPA style assessments for schools that focus on analyzing text. Those samples are being collected and scored and will paint a district picture for schools to be able to further implement strategies to aid in student achievement.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

- The Mathematics and Science Department has expanded its administration of weekly assessments to all seven elementary schools, OPA and OHS. These weekly student data results will be used to compare student proficiency at each grade level across schools and will help drive classroom instruction throughout the district. Weekly postings of student performance data will be made available next week. The first weekly Mathematics ‘Champions of the Week’ Trophies have been awarded this week and will continue throughout the year.
- The Mathematics and Science Department will begin engaging math teachers of grade levels K – 5 in bi-monthly horizontal articulation across the district, Everyday Mathematics consultant. The rotating schedule will utilize current communication technology and facilities in the district to minimize costs.
- The Science Department has upgraded all FOSS Kits for grades K – 6 with the intent of making every day of science instruction current and complete. The goal now is to create a rotating schedule where science teachers can meet bi-monthly to discuss teaching strategies and to share classroom experiences with peers.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- **Saturday Arts Academy (SAA):** The district will again offer the Saturday Arts Academy starting January 21st! This is a unique opportunity for your children grades K-12 will participate in high quality lessons in the Arts. For 2 eight week periods, classes in painting, crafts, dance and private piano lessons will be offered on Saturday at Lincoln Avenue School. This year the district is subsidizing the cost making it only \$25 for an eight week session. The classes run from 9:00 to 10:30 and 11:00-12:30. Applications and flyers will be distributed through your child’s school so checkbook bags to take advantage of this outstanding opportunity!

- **Rising Tide Capital (RTC):** Through a partnership with the school district, JP Morgan Chase and the city, Rising Tide Capital is able to provide classes for inspiring entrepreneurs. Their approach is as follows:
 - Rising Tide Capital brings high-quality business-development services to a segment of the entrepreneurial market that faces obstacles accessing and benefiting from mainstream small-business services.
 - Through a grassroots methodology and innovative educational practices, Rising Tide Capital serves entrepreneurs who find themselves either disconnected from the mainstream or inadequately served by it.
 - Rising Tide Capital contributes to a “continuum of services” by serving entrepreneurs who would not otherwise be served as well as acting as a bridge that connects them to additional existing resources.
 - Rising Tide Capital aims to bring scale, depth of market outreach, and innovation to grassroots economic revitalization.

The second session of classes will begin soon. Recruitment/orientation session is scheduled to take place at Rosa Parks Central Community School on January 7 from 10-11. If you are an entrepreneur or have an idea to become one, I strongly urge you to be a part of this unique and effective support. I also want to express my kudos to the first class of entrepreneurs graduating the first session held in Orange.

- **Scholars Academy Opening:** We as a district are working to address the needs of our students who meet the following definition in grades 1-7:

“Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high academic achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.”

-US Department of Education definition for Gifted/Talented

- To that end, we are proud to announce that we are opening an academy at the former Mt. Carmel School – Scholars Academy. Students who meet the district criteria will receive instruction for 1 day a week that is designed to challenge academically and be a platform to expand the students’ skills in their areas of strength. More information will be forthcoming through the home school.

SPECIAL SERVICES

- The Orange Township Public Schools in partnership with Arts Unbound of Orange Ironworks will begin classes for students with disabilities January 2012. The partnership will focus on arts education, skills building and a variety of vocational opportunities in the visual arts to youth and adults with mental, developmental and physical disabilities.
- Arts Unbound, located in Orange, NJ, has also entered into a partnership with Hands, Inc., and the Valley Arts District and is proud to anchor the district as one of the first tenants in the area. The Valley Arts District is designated as a cultural arts revitalization zone and anticipates growing into a vibrant arts community over the next several years.
- This is the first time Arts Unbound will focus on preschoolers. The venture is both artistically based and practical. The project strives to inspire students of all ages through classes in the visual arts, cultivating avenues of self-expression, personal achievement and life enrichment that come with mastering art techniques. Arts Unbound will also provide the professional training necessary for emerging artists to compete on the retail market and to share their creativity with the world as artists who happen to live with disabilities.
- The Orange Township Public Schools and Arts Unbound hopes to grow the program to include additional vocational training in the arts industry by hiring interns and hourly workers in our offices and retail outlets. This gives individuals the opportunity to learn marketable skills in arts administration, web and social media technologies, art studio management and gallery/retail sales.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

- Completed the Certificated Fall Report for all certificated and non-certificated staff members; inclusive of salaries, separations, transfers, vacancies, languages spoken in the home and new staff data.
- Met with various employees and substitutes regarding employment issues and payroll matters.
- Reviewed and prepared court documents for employee tenure proceedings.
- Met with principals to log in first cycle observations.
- Reviewed and corrected the combined Orange Education Association contract; inclusive of teachers, secretaries, and paraprofessional and security units.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

- **Facilities:**

Facility Committee Meeting was held on 12/05/2011 @ 2:30 PM at the Board of Education administration building, 451 Lincoln Avenue Orange. Discussion and updates were presented on the following items, as a continuation from the November 2011 meeting:

- a. 123 Cleveland Street building renovation project to house the Alternative School Program
- b. Renovations of Orange High School Science Labs, vendors are being solicited to obtain quotes and/or proposals.
- c. Renovation of Cleveland Street School smoke stack (emergent need resolution is being presented on 11/8/11 to the Board for approval)
- d. Renovation of Orange Preparatory Academy (OPA) roof parapets (emergent need, quotes are being obtained at the present time)
- e. Renovation of Orange High School (OHS) HVAC system (98% completion, additional funds are being sort from NJSDA to finalize the project)
- f. Renovation of OPA gym lights (finally approved and additional documents as requested by NJSDA are being sent for funds to be released to start the project)
- g. Demolition of 149 Oakwood Avenue property.

- **Finance:**

- a. The business office has timely completed and submitted the district audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011 to the Essex County State Department of Education (Executive Superintendent of Schools).
- b. The business office has completed and filed the IDEA-ARRA Part B and ARRA Preschool State final report. The district received a congratulatory message from the state indicating the reports has met all technical review and has been approved.

Holiday Greetings

Wishing you and your loved ones peace, health, happiness, and prosperity in this coming New Year!