

**Superintendent's Report
Orange Board of Education
September 14, 2010**

The following represents the report of the Superintendent of Schools for the September 14, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

School Opening:

- Just as the new decade has begun, a new and improved Orange is under construction. The 2010-11 school year has commenced with re-districting, new initiatives, new guidelines, in some cases new uniforms and an energetic academic focus. The staff worked diligently over the past months to prepare for a very smooth and efficient opening. A special thank you to parents for partnering with us in the implementation of the cell phone policy, completing summer packets, purchasing uniforms and the necessary notebooks, as well as addressing the very serious issue of tardiness. As said previously we are collaboratively constructing a district to move into 21st Century learning goals and standards.

Curriculum & Instruction

- Parents are encouraged to attend the various open houses as there are many new initiatives for you to see and learn more about. Parents are advised that homework is mandatory and that an important part of that homework is daily reading. In addition to reading, there should be assignments in other content areas. In addition to homework, parents will be required to sign test papers to document that they are aware of how well their child is doing in school.

Special Services

- On July 28, 2010, the district received the Annual Public Report of Local District Performance for Special Education. The district was rated as "Meets Requirements" by the State of New Jersey, Department of Education. Areas reviewed included Discipline policies, procedures and practices; Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and in specific disability categories; Completed evaluations within mandated timelines; Transition planning to meet post secondary goals from age 16 to 21 and Least Restrictive Environment. Dr. Roberta Whole, Director of the Office of Special Education expressed appreciation for our efforts to enhance programs and services for students with disabilities.
- A summary of the Special Education End of the Year Report indicates the following data and statistics: Initial Classifications - 139; Reevaluations - 340; Students Returned to General Education - 8 (Declassifications) and Number Graduating - 40. We are proud of the productivity and commitment of our dedicated child study teams, teachers and related services staff.

- Part of the district's annual budget includes revenue to be generated through the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI). Districts receive reimbursements for medicaid eligible services such as IEP meetings, counseling, nursing and speech services. During the 2008-2009 School Year a Corrective Action Plan was developed to achieve the projected finances for the district. As a result of continuous training, monitoring and commitment to meet our goals, the district revenue as of June 30, 2010 was as follows: FY 10 SEMI Projection - \$252,108.86. FY 10 Budgeted SEMI Revenue - \$226,897.98. FY 10 SEMI Achieved - \$216,382.69. The percent of SEMI Budgeted Revenue Achieved was rated 95%. Kudos to Samara Malaman, SEMI liaison, district child study teams, nurses and special education departmental staff.
- Life Skills Program at Park Avenue School.
The Special Education students are participating in a Life Skills and Consumer Science class at Park Avenue School. The class will provide an opportunity for our students to maintain a job, make new friends, cook, clean, go grocery shopping and take public transportation on their own. This class allows them to learn new skills and contribute to his or her community.

Special Programs

- Pre-K

It is with great pride I announce recognition by the NJDOE of our preschool program as having fully met all the criteria indicating that all components that make up a quality preschool program are in place in Orange. The NJ Department of education further commended our program for:

- Collaboration with curriculum, special education and bilingual education to inform decisions making and continuous improvement in the Pre-K program.
- Recruitment and outreach to the community with over 90% of the eligible children now attending quality Pre-K through the district.
- Rigorous implementation of the High Scope curriculum at all sites resulting in 9 of our teachers receiving national High Scope certification.

I commend our Early Childhood Department, lead by Mrs. Jacquelyn Blanton, for their tireless dedication to offering high quality education for our youngest students.

With Pre-K as the foundation, the district is about to embark on our participation in the PreK-3 National Demonstration Lab Initiative. We are one of 3 districts chosen in New Jersey to be a national demonstration district exemplifying effective instructional practice on a continuum from Pre-K- grade 3.

- Saturday Arts Academy

We are in the planning stages for launching a Saturday Arts Academy. For a nominal fee, residents will be able to attend the Academy for instruction in dance, music, theater, and technology on Saturdays throughout the school year provided in our district schools. The district will publicize information through the schools once the Academy is ready to open.

- Career Center

A new student career center has opened at OHS. The Career Center will be managed Ms. Linda Siddig, Structured Learning Coordinator. Each 8th grader will take a career interest inventory and receive career counseling. Through the use of Naviance, students and parents will receive a

four (4) year projected course of study matching the students' career interest. Mrs. Siddig and the guidance department will work with the students to match community service, clubs and internships that correspond with their area of interest.

- NJSEEDS

This summer 45 of our OHS students attended 3 weeks at Hobart University in upstate New York with the NJSEEDS program. This program provides rigorous course studies at Seton Hall, college visits, college planning and mentorship for each child. The objective is to provide background and support to allow for entrance in top universities for our students. This school year we are looking to expand the number of students that will have the opportunity to participate in this program

- Work Place Readiness

Jewish Vocational Services through a grant from JPMorgan Chase will provide 13 weeks of job retraining, ESL and work place readiness in partnership with the Central Campus Community School. In addition to the 13 weeks, follow up employment placing will be offered. Courses will be offered for English Language Learners as well as native speakers of English.

- Hispanic Heritage Month

Coordinated by the World Cultures and Bilingual Departments, from September 15 to October 15 the district will be honoring the rich culture of the Latino community. Activities are planned including assemblies and projects. You will receive more information through the schools.

- Urban Gardens

The district is partnering with Garden State Urban Farms (GSUF) to bring hydroponic gardening into our classrooms. Each school will receive 5 "grow boxes" to produce their own vegetables. Science teachers were trained on the educational standards connection to hydroponic gardens through the GSUF program. They will incorporate this into the classroom science studies. Additionally, a hydroponic upright grow closet was donated to OPA for more in-depth studies in botany and horticulture.

- Turnaround For Children

Turnaround for Children received a substantial grant to work with the Orange district to bring this program. Turnaround works with school staff on classroom management, systemic student support, addressing the needs of students in difficulty and connecting the school to outside resources necessary for the well being of their population. This year we are working with Turnaround at Oakwood, Forest, OPA and eventually OHS.

- On the Map Nationally

JPMorgan Chase Foundation was asked to testify in front of the US Congress concerning examples of neighborhood revitalization through partnerships with education. The foundation decided to highlight New Jersey and Orange in particular. Our work with PreK3 and Turnaround, both partially funded through Chase, will be presented as innovative and forward thinking approaches to strengthening and improving the quality of life in a community.

Human Resources

The following reports and/or issues were addressed in the Operations/Human Resources Department in August, 2010.

- ✚ Continued to revise transfers and reassignments of staff, as a result of student redistricting and budget reductions.
- ✚ Interviewed new applicants to fill vacant positions. For the 2010-11 school year, we hired 2 administrators, 1 secretary, 17 teachers, and 4 paraprofessionals for a total of 24 new staff members. We recalled 5 paraprofessionals and 14 certified staff and reassigned 26 certified staff members whose positions were abolished.
- ✚ A staff orientation was held on August 30th for the new staff members and on August 31st, an orientation/workshop was held for the district substitutes. Approximately 140 substitutes attended this annual training.
- ✚ The HR staff prepared a longevity report for twelve and ten month employees who were entitled to longevity for SY 2009-10 and SY 2010-11.
- ✚ The HR Department took the lead in the interview process to hire a new Principal for Orange High School. The Committee consisted of parents, students, teachers and administrators. Principal William Gibney was hired in August.

The HR Department is preparing to disseminate information to all staff members to log in their absences via the computer. This new procedure will be rolled out in early October.

Additionally, the HR Department will be utilizing a computerized system to log in applicant resumes on line. This new applicant intake process will be active in November.

Facilities:

- **Lincoln Avenue School**

The renovation and addition project for Lincoln Av. School is at 98% completion, outstanding items include but not limited to the final punch list issues and some district concerns. The Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) was received on August 16, 2010 which made it very difficult to complete the moving in process on time and teachers did not have enough time to properly set up their classrooms before school opened for students on September 7, 2010. Mr. James is coordinating with NJSDA to finalizing the outstanding construction punch list items.

A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 10:00 AM.** at the Lincoln Avenue Elementary School.

- **Old Police Station Building 539 Lincoln Avenue:**

The district is still awaiting response from Mayor Hawkins, regarding a letter to the city expressing the district's interest in having the building returned to the Board of Education as we are desperately in need of additional instruction and program spaces.

- **Orange High School (OHS) Air Handling Unit (HVAC) system upgrade and replacement:**
The district have received bids for the renovation project and have forwarded all related documents to the New Jersey Schools Development Authority (NJSDA) for review and approval, upon which the Orange Board will then award the bid to the selected lowest responsible bidder. The award process is expected to be completed within the next few days.
- **Orange High School (OHS) Parking Lots Potholes Repairs:**
The district is still waiting for a response from the Mayor's Office on a request made to help patch the potholes in the parking lots at the Orange High School.
- **Orange Prep Academy (former Orange Middle School) Gym Light Replacement Project:**
According to Ms. Karen Nichols of KNTM architects, who is overseeing the project for the district, she notified us that final approval to bid from NJSDA is still pending.
- **Finance:** The district received an award from the Association of School Business Officials International, for our completion and presentation of its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009.

Future Meetings and Upcoming Events:

- Open House Schedule for the District – *attached*
- Forest Street Art Show
 - 6:00 p.m., on Wednesday, September 15, 2010
- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – Lincoln Avenue School
 - 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, September 15, 2010
- Professional Development Day Scheduled for
 - Thursday, September 23, 2010
 - Friday, September 24, 2010