Community Contact

Newsletter of the South Plainfield Board of Education *December 2010*

Special Congratulations to Mr. Knarr and His Advanced Placement Calculus Students

Congratulations to Mr. Knarr and his Advanced Placement students. On the May 2010 Calculus BC test which includes all topics from Calculus I and II every student in Mr. Knarr's class received the highest score (5). These students may earn 6-8 college credits depending on their major and school.

Ashley Aya, Morgan Bethea, Jimmy Bijlani, Stephen Coppi, Alexander Horn, Maher Khan, Ashley Pierce, Courtney Schaefer, Alexandra Skula, Jonathan Sukenik, Michael Sullivan and Richard Szeliga worked hard all year under the tutelage of Mr. Knarr.

In his class, students are asked questions about anything that they have learned at any time (including topics from Calculus I). That allows the students to see how the new concepts that they are learning are connected to the ones that they have previously learned. According to Mr. Knarr his openness to questioning, "Makes for easy review when we actually reach the exam. Most of my students last year told me that they studied for an hour or two for the exam because they already felt that they had been reviewing all year."

Mr. Knarr, a graduate of Rutgers University, earned degrees in Math and Math Education. He has also lectured to Rutgers students on Calculus. This is Mr. Knarr's 7th year teaching at South Plainfield High School. We are proud to have him as a member of our math department.

District Testing Report

On November 17, 2010, Dr. Lorraine Cella, Assistant Superintendent, presented an overview of the District's State testing results. In order to determine whether all students were making satisfactory progress, a system of state assessments for grades 11, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 and 3 has been developed. All of the state tests assess achievement of standards in language arts literacy and mathematics. The fourth and eighth grade tests also assess achievement of standards in science. In addition, the state has implemented End of Course (EOC) assessments in Algebra I and Biology which will be operational with the 2011 testing. EOC Algebra II is still in its piloting status.

Test data is given in each of the content areas for all students. With the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB), the federal government required that all the test data be disaggregated into subgroups. Those subgroups include students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, ethnicity (White, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic) and economically disadvantaged.

The NCLB legislation uses the phrase adequate yearly progress (AYP) to refer to the benchmarks that schools must attain in any given year to meet state assessment standards. The number indicates the percentage of all students and all subgroups that must fall into the proficient or advanced proficient categories for each test.

The calculation of the district's AYP results is a complex process that involves student mobility, amount of time in the district, participation rate and minimum subgroup sizes which are called indicators. Grade levels are aggregated in this way: participation data for grades 3 and 4 are combined and data for grades 7 and 8 are combined. Data for grade 5 (considered elementary) and grade 6 (considered middle school) are calculated separately, as is the data for grade 11. Each grade span is responsible for meeting 40 indicators. Of the 40, 20 involve participation rate, 10 the language arts literacy section of the test, 10 the mathematics section of the test and one is a secondary measure (attendance rate for elementary and middle schools & graduation rate for high school).

Annual Yearly Progress Results

High School: The Total Students, White, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Economically Disadvantaged and Hispanic subgroups met the 2010 AYP benchmarks. The students with Disabilities subgroup made Safe Harbor in both Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics Disadvantaged. Consequently, the high school improved its AYP status and remains in YEAR 2 HOLD.

Middle School: The Total Students, White, Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic subgroups made the 2010 AYP benchmarks. Students with Disabilities subgroup made AYP benchmark in Language Arts and made Safe Harbor in mathematics. The African American subgroup met AYP in Language Arts Literacy and made Safe Harbor in math. Economically Disadvantaged met 2010 AYP benchmarks in Language Arts, but not in math.

Grant School: Grade 6: The Total Students, White, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups made AYP. Students with Disabilities made Safe Harbor in math, but did not make AYP in Language Arts Literacy. Grade 5: The Total Students, White, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups made AYP. Students with Disabilities did not make AYP in math or Language Arts Literacy.

Kennedy, Riley and Roosevelt made AYP in all subgroups. **Franklin** made AYP in the subgroup of White in both math and Language Arts Literacy. The Total Population made AYP in Math, but not in Language Arts Literacy. Economically disadvantaged made AYP in math and made Safe Harbor in Language Arts Literacy.

Paperless Goal Achieved

The BOE is happy to announce that its goal to "go paperless" with interim reports and report cards for students in grades 5 – 12 has been successfully accomplished. Parents have MMS accounts and have access to student grades. Additionally, our calendar and our newsletter are now posted on line.
We thank all staff that worked together to achieve a greener South Plainfield. We also have a parent link with information about setting up your MMS account: http://spboe.org/spps/Parent%27s%20Link/

Parents who are still experiencing trouble with MMS should contact their principals.

Summer Construction Projects

One set of boys and girls bathrooms in the Middle School, Grant School, Franklin, Kennedy, and Riley were gutted this summer and completely refurbished. New stalls, new sinks, tiles, urinals and soap dispensers were installed. Additionally the Middle School is armed with a new fire alarm system, new ceilings and lights. The construction crews worked diligently all summer. All projects were approved and certificates of occupancy were granted.

Positions and Programs Returned

With a defeated budget the BOE was forced to cut positions and programs. However, due to breakage, we were able to restore many positions and programs. Both the Supervisor of Technology and the Director of Adult and Continuing Education were restored. Several teaching positions were reinstated (Middle School Math teacher, High School science teacher, High School Spanish teacher, and Roosevelt Media Specialist). Our High School psychologist was also restored. Team leaders at the High School and Middle School were also restored.

We were also able to reinstate 10 out of 12 Instructional Support Aides, one Middle School Secretary, a Special Education Secretary with ARRA funds and a Computer Technician.

All extra-curricular activities were reinstated. While some coaching positions were not reinstated, many were returned (Fall Sports: High School: 2 football, 1 boys soccer, 1 girls soccer, 1 field hockey Winter Sports: High School: 1 boys basketball, 1 girls basketball, 1 wrestling, 1 cheerleading, 2 winter track, 1 swimming; Spring Sports :High School: (1 baseball, 1 softball).

And finally, we plan to reinstate summer school for the summer of 2011.

Welcome to New Administrators

Technology Supervisor
Annemarie Stoeckel, a veteran teacher in South Plainfield since 1995, who worked at Roosevelt School as a technology instructor was appointed Technology Supervisor in November 2010. Prior to that, she taught English for two years in South Plainfield High School and for eight years at the Lincoln Technical Institute. In 2002, Mrs. Stoeckel received her Masters in Educational Technology from New Jersey City University. Then she went on to receive her Supervisor's Certificate in 2003 and became certified as an Educational Media Specialist in 2004. In addition, she has been an adjunct professor in the Educational Technology Department at New Jersey City University since 2004. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to help all staff and students use technology in their lessons," she indicated. Additionally, she recently presented Welcome to Wikis – Create, Communicate, and Collaborate! at the NJEA Convention on November 4, 2010. We welcome Ms. Stoeckel to our administrative team.

High School Principal Appointed
James M. Pedersen has been appointed as the High School Principal. He was a former Assistant Principal, Student Support and Administrator for East Orange Campus High School in East Orange where he was also an English Teacher. His accomplishments

include creating and implementing the Dropout Prevention Program, school-wide Academic Recognition Program. He increased student attendance rate by 5% (2004-2007), increased Senior Scholarship Program donations and was instrumental in creating and executing Small Learning Communities. He is currently a Doctoral Candidate at Seton Hall University. Mr. Pederson has also served as an adjunct professor at Passaic County Community College, Felician College, and New Jersey City University. We welcome him and wish him the best of luck.

Interim Business Administrator Selected

Nicholas C. Puleio was appointed the Interim Business Administrator/ Board Secretary for the district. He has been an interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary at numerous districts which include Green Brook, Branchburg, Brick Township, Lawrence Township, Neptune Township and Spotswood. He was the State Fiscal Monitor for Camden City School District. Mr. Puleio has served as a mentor to many newly certified Business Administrators. Dr. Bowen, Acting Superintendent, looks forward to working with Mr. Puleio.

Interim Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Frank Cocchiola, will serve as our Interim Assistant Superintendent effective December 16th Dr. Cocchiola is a recent retiree from the Wallington School District where he worked for 42 years, the last 20 as the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Cocchiola earned his doctorate in Administration and Supervision from Fordham University, New York, NY. He earned his Masters degree in Administration and Supervision from Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ and his Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics, Education from Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Felician College and at Caldwell College, Caldwell, NJ.

We would like to wish everyone a very happy Holiday