



## Message from the Superintendent

Welcome back to school! It's hard to believe that it is already October. I am hopeful that this unusual school year is off to a good start for your family. The district has been working tirelessly to bring students back to school as soon as possible according to our hybrid schedule. We look forward to bringing our middle school students back very soon! This September new staff and new students joined our school community. I'd like to offer a sincere welcome to everyone who is new to Readington! We are sure you will add greatly to our fantastic community.

Over the course of the 2019-2020 school year, the district embarked on a journey to develop a new mission statement and strategic goals. This year, we will begin to make our goals a reality undeterred by the COVID-19 pandemic. These goals are long-term in nature so we will continue our work over the next three to five years, but this year marks the beginning stages. Our goals revolve around three themes: inquisitive learning, social awareness, and partnerships. We will use these strategic goals to fulfill our mission of empowering members of our community to lead purposeful lives with integrity, to cultivate a spirit of discovery, and to embrace connections in our diverse, global society. We look forward to this academic year where we can watch children grow in ways that will live up to our mission.



Dr. Jonathan Hart / 908-534-2897  
Follow me on twitter @hartjonathanr

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### Superintendent Coffee Chat – October 7, 2020

Please join Dr. Jonathan Hart on Wednesday, October 7 for our first virtual Superintendent Coffee Chat. Conversation Topic: Mental Health and Wellness During COVID. Presented by: Readington Mental Health Professionals and Hunterdon Behavioral Health. Please [click here](#) to view our video invitation. For more information and the Google Meet Link, please [click here](#).

### Governor's Educator of the Year Program

Each year, Readington Township School District participates in the New Jersey Department of Education Governor's Educator of the Year Program. This program recognizes excellence in education, a direct result of the hard work of our outstanding classroom teachers and educational services professionals (see attached [eligibility criteria](#) for the list of educational services professionals). One of the most meaningful gestures to show appreciation to our staff would be to nominate them for the Governor's Educator of the Year recognition. To access the nomination form, please [click here](#). Please complete and return it to your building principal by Friday, October 30, 2020.

## Curriculum Corner

### The Importance of an At-Home Learning Environment

Dr. Stacey Brown, Supervisor of Humanities and Ms. Sarah Pauch, Supervisor of Math, Science & Technology

Creating a productive learning environment is something that teachers have mastered in their classrooms; however, this is now something that needs to be replicated at home as well. Without a specific learning spot, students can be easily distracted, they won't have the needed supplies at hand, and there is a lack of consistency. There are two major factors to consider when creating a home learning environment, the age of your child and their interests.



When creating a learning environment for your child keep these ideas from *Tips For Setting Up An At-Home Learning Environment For Young Students* by Andrea Goetchius and Lauren Acree in mind.

**Use predictable scheduling:** Every day, start out with a predictable routine that signals that learning time is starting.

**Build routines that foster independence:** Spend the first few weeks establishing routines and procedures and then gradually release control to your child. Consider explicitly teaching your student what they can do when learning is hard.

**Encourage your children to engage in independent work or play:** Studies show that young children benefit from independent play, and older students benefit from time away from the screen as well. Consider rewards for independence and accomplishing big tasks that leverage their desire to be more adult and build in free choice activities.

**Take off the pressure:** Know that no one expects you to be a teacher and no one expects you to do it all. One way to prioritize what you do with your learner is to look at the readiness standards for your student's age group. While there are a lot of things you can possibly work on, you might ask your teacher which one or two to focus on.

For additional information on this topic, [click here](#) to read the full article.

## The Importance of Asking Questions: Promoting Inquiry

Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent of Schools



One of our strategic goals this year is inquisitive learning. Specifically, our goal asks all members of our community to create and establish an inquiry framework that values an interest-driven learning environment. Learners will, individually and collaboratively, focus on identifying, analyzing, and solving problems as inquisitive members of their community. So, what does this mean? How can parents help? After all, parents are critical members of our community who can promote inquiry.

It's actually pretty simple. You can start by asking questions. During our strategic planning process, the team working on the inquisitive learning goal came across a New York Times article from 1988, which sums up the power of asking good questions. In the article, Nobellaureate in physics Isidor Rabi, discusses why he became a scientist, rather than a doctor, lawyer or businessman. His answer was about how after school his mom asked him a question that made him think about his school day differently. His mom would ask, "Izzy, did you ask a good question today?" It was this question that prompted Dr. Rabi to continue asking questions that led him to become a scientist.

Asking questions promotes inquiry. Parents, myself included, will often ask something like "What did you learn in school today?" The response can often be "nothing" depending on the age of your child. In my case, my preschooler doesn't always remember he was even in school that day. It's up to us as parents to ask a different kind of question that promotes children's thinking. I now ask my 4-year old son, "What was your favorite part of school today?" Again, he's four so sometimes I don't get much of an answer, but many times I'll hear all about a story his teacher read or a friend he played with. Then I can ask more questions. Try asking your child about his or her favorite part of the school day. Consider other questions like: What was the hardest thing you had to do today? What did you read in class? What was your favorite class today? What made you smile today? Can you tell me how you showed kindness? These questions, even the SEL-like questions, promote critical thinking and analytical skills - skills embedded in our strategic goal. Start small and you, as parents, can help us achieve our inquiry goal!

I've attached a short YouTube video clip that summarizes Dr. Rabi's story: [click here](#).

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## Chromebook Technical Support for Students and Parents

Mr. James Belske, District Technology Coordinator  
[jbelske@readington.k12.nj.us](mailto:jbelske@readington.k12.nj.us) or 908-386-2502



If you are experiencing any technical issues with a Chromebook, please [click here](#) to submit your issue or question, our support team will get back to you shortly.

- To follow up on any previously submitted request or general questions please email us at [techsupport@readington.k12.nj.us](mailto:techsupport@readington.k12.nj.us).
- To troubleshoot common Chromebook issues at Home - Please follow these steps [click here](#).
- Parent Resource: [Tech@Home Website](#)
- If you have any other questions, concerns, or feedback, please contact Jim Belske at the email address/phone number listed above.



## SEL Practices Around the District

Mr. Anthony Tumolo, Supervisor of SEL and Special Projects

COVID-19 has and continues to have a profound effect on all of our lives, leaving life as we once knew it, forever changed. Social distancing, remote learning, and mask-wearing have become part of the daily conversations among many school districts including Readington Township Public Schools. The Readington staff strive to teach our students to develop resilience, grit, flexibility, and a centered mind and body through explicit social and emotional learning instruction. SEL has been a district priority for several years in Readington, but the administrative team recognizes that since the outbreak of the pandemic, the necessity for this work has increased exponentially. Below is a brief summary of some of our district efforts to ensure that our staff and students are mentally healthy, so they can navigate this new normal we have come to know all too well. Also, included is a list of upcoming events and educational training opportunities for parents and community members relating to social and emotional learning. Stay tuned for more information pertaining to dates, times, and virtual links in reference to these happenings.

| <p><b>SEL for Students and Staff</b></p>   | <p><b>SEL Events and Programs for Community Members</b><br/> <i>*Please check the Readington homepage and RSVP if you plan to attend any of these virtual events.</i></p>   |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Daily Brain Break Videos to get students moving throughout the day (Breathe, Seated Exercises, Standing Exercises, and Rest)</li> <li>2. Morning Meeting and Connection Circles to strengthen classroom relationships.</li> <li>3. SEL activities and lessons that are integrated into academic curricular subjects.</li> <li>4. Weekly Student Check-ins that will be administered in November, January, and April. The School Counseling Department will meet regularly to review the data collected and create action plans to support all of our students and their emotional and academic needs.</li> <li>5. Professional development opportunities focusing on Adult SEL</li> <li>6. Resources on self-care practices for the Readington staff to ensure their emotional needs are being heard, valued, and adequately met.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Superintendent Virtual Coffee Chat on October 7th @ 6:00pm-7:00pm.</li> <li>2. Virtual Parent Training from Child Assault Prevention (CAP). This training is being offered to Readington Middle School Parents ONLY. Date, time, and google meet link will share at the appropriate time.</li> <li>3. Four 1-hour virtual parent sessions focused on CASEL's 5 core SEL competencies (<b>Self Awareness and Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making</b>). These sessions will be led by a panel consisting of various members from the Readington SEL District Committee. Together we will unpack each competency and provide strategies geared towards adult and student SEL competence. Take-home resources will be provided for participants.</li> </ol> |

"Find the good. It's all around you. Find it, showcase it, and you'll start believing in it." - Jesse Owens

## Building Spotlight: Readington Middle School

Mrs. Sharon Moffat, Principal



Happy October! Fall is a wonderful time of year as the leaves change, and we pull our sweaters out of the closet to prepare for cooler temperatures. The school year is in full swing, even though it has been a year like no other. Even virtually, your children have been hard at work, and it is a pleasure to see their smiling faces when I visit the different Google Classrooms.

We are so excited to welcome your children back to school the week of October 12, using the hybrid model. Students who have been designated as "A" day will return to school Tuesday, October 13, and more information will follow. The classrooms are cleaned and ready for the students to return.

During the month of October, we will commemorate Week of Respect, School Violence Awareness Week, and Red Ribbon Week. Two major themes, cyber safety and anti-bullying, will be explored through various lessons in the classrooms. Be sure to read our "Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying" (HIB) policy to help your children as they navigate through the middle school years. [Readington HIB policy](#)

Our student council has already been very active this school year. They have sponsored virtual spirit days, and the executive committee members record the morning announcements each day. If your child would like to be involved, refer them to the Student Council link on our webpage. We want our students to be active participants in our school community.

Our teachers are integrating technology into their lessons to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Through Google Classroom, teachers are able to post videos and other resources to help the students learn. The classrooms have been outfitted with updated Smartboards, which will permit our students to have more interactive experiences within the classroom.

Please continue to check Genesis for your child's grades, and use the monthly school calendar to keep track of all upcoming events. The first Virtual Principal's Chat of the school year is Tuesday, October 27 at 2 PM. More information, including the link, will be sent out through the Genesis blast as the date approaches. I am looking forward to a great school year. Thank you for continuing to be a partner in your child's education.

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## Mark Your Calendars

### Upcoming Events:

- October 7 / Superintendent Coffee Chat
- October 13 / Grades 6-8 Return to In-person Instruction
- October 14 / HSA Business Meeting
- November 3 / Election Day – Virtual Day
- December 1 / Superintendent Coffee Chat

### Upcoming BOE Meetings:

- October 13, November 10, December 8, January 5

### District Calendars:

- At a glance district calendar, please [click here](#).
- Full district calendar, please [click here](#).

