



Message from the Superintendent

It's hard to believe that it has been one year since the COVID-19 pandemic first surfaced. On March 2 of last year I sent a letter to families informing them of the coronavirus spread within the United States and emphasized hand washing, cleaning surfaces, and covering one's cough. Little did I know that this would be the first of many letters related to COVID-19 over the course of the year. Here we are a year later with plexiglass dividers and masks as barriers between individuals. I am pleased to say that, despite these barriers, we have remained close and connected as a school community. Teachers and staff have reinvented ways to build rapport with students via Google Meet and Zoom. Our bus drivers have been making food deliveries to families. A community member coordinated a toy drive over the holidays. There are countless ways in which we remain bonded despite these unfortunate circumstances. In summary, our community has rallied together because we are a strong, resilient group of people. Let's celebrate the progress we have made together and let's turn our attention to the road forward; toward a sense of normalcy and recovery. Stay safe and healthy!



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

Superintendent Coffee Chat – March 31, 2021



Please join Dr. Jonathan Hart on Wednesday, March 31 at 9:00 a.m. for our virtual Superintendent Coffee Chat. Conversation Topic: *Student Inquiry Projects and Housing Developments*. Please RSVP to: rsvp@readington.k12.nj.us. For more information and the Google Meet Link, please [click here](#).

“I do the very best I know how – the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end.” – Abraham Lincoln

Our School District is Preparing for Enrollment Increases

Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent

At the February 9 Board of Education meeting I informed the Board and community of housing development plans that will impact our school enrollment. Along with the overall enrollment impact, our analyses indicate a need to redistrict is upon us. There are four (4) developments that have been constructed or are under construction. The Willows at Whitehouse Station is a 72-unit complex that was completed in 2020. This development provided our district with a baseline of student enrollment projections. The Ridge at Readington is under construction on Route 22 west in Whitehouse Station. This development will be a 254-unit complex. The Bramco/Interstate Ironworks development on Mullen Road may be completed in the year 2023-2024 and includes 192 housing units. Finally, the Diaz Property on Route 202 in Three Bridges is several years from completion but will house 80 housing units.

Our enrollment analysis projects well over 100 students enrolling in our district simply due to the housing development construction. While we have room to grow in our district, we are beginning to find that Whitehouse and Three Bridges enrollment is becoming increasingly disproportionate. We anticipate the disparity in enrollment to increase in the next several years.

The district has developed a five year redistricting implementation plan. The plan has been launched starting with next school year - the 2021-2022 school year. The plan identifies certain residences on certain streets to be redistricted from Whitehouse School to Three Bridges School over the next five years starting with Kindergarten enrollees and new move-ins. Simply put, families living on one of the streets listed below or families moving into Readington on the streets listed below will have their Kindergarten students or newly enrolled students attend Three Bridges.

Arrowhead Road	Groendyke Road	Militia Road East
Blacksmith Road	Hamilton Road	Pine Bank Road
Casper Berger Road	Heath Road	Readington Road
Cherry Court	Hillcrest Road	Rebel Road
Cole Road	Holland Brook Road	Roosevelt Road
Conover Road	Indian Run	Smith Road
Dalley Street	Jennings Lane	Sutphen Lane
Distillery Road	Kinney's Sawmill Road	Swackhamer Road
Erskine Road	Militia Road	Van Pelt Drive

If you are interested in gathering more information, please [click here](#) to review the presentation discussed at the February 9 Board of Education meeting. If you believe you may be impacted by the redistricting plan you can also attend an information session with the Superintendent on April 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Google Meeting at the following link:

Meeting ID

meet.google.com/oed-ajuo-oyv

Phone Numbers

(US)+1 402-526-0462

PIN: 969 398 172#



Curriculum Corner

How Digital Detox Can Benefit Your Child

Dr. Stacey Brown, Supervisor of Humanities, Ms. Sarah Pauch, Supervisor of Math, Science & Technology, and Ms. Sherry Krial, Supervisor of Professional Development/Tech+

Technology is unavoidable and everywhere. As it continues to emerge and screens are a part of everyday life, families are faced with how much time to allow kids to play on electronic devices. Even the American Academy of Pediatrics acknowledges that two hours of screen time per day is difficult to enforce. This is especially true when kids have smartphones and use devices for schoolwork and to read books.

Families now need to ask the question if screen time has taken over their lives. Are kids buried in their devices, or does family time consist of sitting in the same room staring at smartphones? If families recognize that unhealthy habits developed, then a digital detox could help.

There are signs that a child could use a break and digital detox.

- Do you get into power struggles over electronics? If so, then a break could help them become more compliant.
- Does your child depend on technology for entertainment? Does your child play video games for hours on end or watch hours of TV each day?
- Does your family watch TV while eating dinner or text from the other room instead of talking face-to-face?
- Do family members sleep with smartphones near the bed or ignore each other to use social media?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, then you may want to try a digital detox to help break the bad habits, help your kids become more compliant, and allow them to explore other interests.

Studies have linked screen time and a variety of behavior problems in children. Aggressive media could contribute to aggressive behavior in children. Screen time late into the night can cause sleep deprivation which can lead to impulsive behavior and reduced emotional regulation. Parents also report that technology may get in the way of responsibilities, such as chores, or start arguments with siblings over who turn it is to play video games first or use a device.

Children can also face social problems due to too much screen time because they have difficulty recognizing other people’s emotions and trouble communicating face-to-face can lead to increased conflict. A study at UCLA found that “face-to-face time is essential for children’s social skills. Unplugging for short periods of time can help children better understand nonverbal cues.” When children are able to recognize other people’s feelings, they can adjust their behavior accordingly.

Studies have also shown that playing outside benefits children and can reduce behavior problems. These studies show green spaces—playing in the grass or around trees—improves attention span and reduces stress. Other studies have linked outdoor play to improved problem-solving skills, creative thinking, and safety skills.

Are you ready for a digital detox for your family? Making conscious decisions to unplug for periods of time can break some bad habits and develop new habits. It can boost a child’s mood and increase their motivation to get their work done.

Below are some strategies for creating a digital detox:

- **A monthly digital-free day** - Perhaps the first Saturday of every month means no screens, or the last Sunday of the month is a quiet family day. Commit to spending quality time together without using electronics for one day every month.
- **A week-long break from electronics** - A camping trip, a vacation in the mountains, or a week in a remote cabin could get everyone away from the electronics. Stepping away from technology could renew everyone's appreciation for simple activities, like board games or playing catch.
- **An electronics-free weekend** - If you can't afford a vacation—or you have a job that makes unplugging for a week seem like an impossibility—consider a digital detox on a smaller scale. Consider making a plan to unplug a few weekends each year.

Finally, no matter what you decide to do to lessen the digital impact, make sure that you are modeling the same behavior with kids to make it more effective.

If you would like to read the full article, click here: <https://www.verywellfamily.com/digital-detox-to-solve-kids-behavior-problems-4087711>

Summer Enrichment

Ms. Sherry Krial, Supervisor of Professional Development/Tech+
Ms. Colleen Ogden, Summer Enrichment Coordinator

The district is proud to offer a revised program this summer. Workshops will be offered in Arts & Crafts, STEM and Baking Creations! For incoming 6th graders only, there will be a "Welcome to RMS" orientation course offered at the middle school. Each workshop is 2.5 hours (morning and/or afternoon) and will last either 3 or 5 days per week.

For many years, outstanding Readington faculty and staff have offered a broad range of short courses for students in the township. These courses have always received very positive feedback from participating students and their parents. In response to recent feedback from the community, the district has redesigned the program to offer its same valuable instruction with a schedule that is more conducive to families' needs.

Summer Enrichment courses will be held at a district school, **July 26 - 30, 2021** from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM and **August 2 - 6, 2021** from 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM. Pre-registration is now open and a place will be held in the program, though no payment is due. The formal registration will

follow and run until May 1st. Registration is filled on a first come first served basis, with pre-registered students getting priority. All Readington students entering grades 1 - 6 are welcome.

Students can expect to engage in a large variety of activities based upon their chosen topic. Kitchen Creations includes cooking and baking favorite recipes as well as dessert decorating and fun non-bake treats and snacks. STEM courses can include Legos, Escape Room type problem solving, hands-on science experiments and coding. Arts & Crafts spans well beyond popsicle sticks and yarn! Students work on a variety of projects including various medium from paper to 3D items. All district safety precautions will be implemented.

The district prides itself on the value services it provides its community. Please join the Enrichment staff this summer to explore, play and learn. The Enrichment staff is eager to host the wonderful children in the district for creative and thoughtful projects and activities. For more information, please [click here](#).

Tech-Tip Clever (Single Sign-On)

Mr. James Belske, District Technology Coordinator
jbelske@readington.k12.nj.us or 908-386-2502



Our district utilizes the Clever single sign-on platform. Clever provides easy, secure access to digital learning resources. With automated rostering, single sign-on and seamless integrations, Clever is an important resource for our students and teachers.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about how to access our school curriculum systems utilizing the Clever platform.

My Kid is Not Motivated, Now What?

As shared by Screenagers

Ideas to help our kids around motivational issues



1. Behavioral Activation

Behavioral activation is about getting help to a person to do small actions towards a goal or engage in things they used to like to do. From there, the hope is that the experiences will elicit some positive emotions. While doing these things, the person is reminded to try and be aware of the moments they do get some pleasure or feel good afterward, knowing you have achieved the goal.

2. Don't give up on the dance

Parenting is such a challenging dance of when to push our kids and when not to. So thinking back to the parent who said, "I am definitely not going to do that again. In the future, if she doesn't want to go, I won't make her." I talked with her about how I can relate because this was the same with our daughter. I told her about the many ways we learned to compromise with our daughter to get her to come hike with us, such as choosing shorter routes. She still would do some groaning, but there were smiles along the trail as well. It paid off. Tessa eventually joined her high school's outdoor club and even went on to help to run it. For some things saying you won't make them do it anymore makes sense, but other times, making compromises and finding different ways to stay on the dance floor with them, will pay off.

3. Admit when you stepped on their toes

I am thinking about a mistake I made regarding trying to get Tessa interested in something she didn't want to do. I always told my kids how I wished my high school had had a debate team and thought all kids should participate at least once in a debate club or team. (Such cool communication skills to be learned, in my humble opinion). When Tessa was in high school, they had such a club. I was, of course, super eager to have her consider getting involved. She went one time but missed the next couple of meetings. I was biting at the chops; I really wanted her to do this. I kept telling her that she needed to give it more of a chance. At one point, I even called the organizer of the club, thinking I might get some little bit of info that could entice her. My calling the club was the final straw. Tessa announced that now there was no way she would go. I felt bad about calling and how pushy I was and told Tessa that I was really sorry. From there on out, I started working harder not to overstep my bounds. The dance is never easy and never foolproof, that is for sure.

Please [click here](#) to view the full article and additional tips from Screenagers.

HIB Parent Video and Information Resource

Mr. Anthony Tumolo, Supervisor of SEL and Special Projects/District Anti-Bullying Coordinator



Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) is a law mandated by the state under the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights. The Readington School District follows a specific board approved policy to investigate and follow through with any and all potential HIB incidents regardless of the findings. A strict investigation and timeline is carried out by our Anti-Bullying Specialists under the guidance of their School Principals. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the investigation, providing support as needed, and for making sure restorative practices are implemented appropriately to educate all students involved in the incident to guarantee that all students feel supported and safe in school. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator, along with the Superintendent then reports all HIB investigations to the Board of Education in a closed session.

Providing education to the staff, students and parents/guardians in the community about the district's HIB policy is a critical necessity and responsibility that the Readington HIB team takes very seriously. The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights has a specific definition for determining if an incident is considered HIB. The reason for this is because there is a clear difference between conflict and bullying. To help explain this, the

Counseling Department determined that parent education surrounding the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights and how the state distinguishes between conflict and bullying, would be the focus for this school year. To address this, the team assembled together to create an educational training video and information resource document for parents informing them on this very important topic.

This year, the district is lucky to have two School Counseling Interns who spear-headed this project under the supervision of their mentors, Mrs. Barbara Pauley, Holland Brook School Counselor and Mrs. Christine Crielly, Readington Middle School Counselor. The video was finalized and shared with the District SEL Supervisor. Once approved, it was posted on the district webpage under the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy Tab. It can also be found on each of the school counselor's websites throughout the district. Access to the HIB video and informational resource document can be found by clicking [HERE](#). These resources will also be shared out through Genesis and building newsletters. If you have any further questions regarding HIB and/or the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights please feel free to contact your building principal, school counselor, or the Anti-Bullying Coordinator.

Parent SEL Event – March 24, 2021



Please join us on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for our third virtual Parent SEL Event. Conversation topic: Relationship Skills. For more information and the Google Meet link, please [click here](#).

**“Find the good. It’s all around you. Find it, showcase it,
and you’ll start believing in it.” – Jesse Owens**

Building Spotlight: Three Bridges School

Mrs. Kristen Higgins, Principal



Three Bridges School celebrates Read Across America the first week of March every year. This year, the pandemic did not squash our celebration. The books chosen this week were not only from Dr. Seuss. We introduced some books with characters from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Each day in the week, the school shared celebratory books and activities.

On Monday, the school shared our national patriotism by reading *The Scrambled States of America*. The staff and students wore red, white, and blue; read books; and sang along with the bouncing words about our 50 states.

On Tuesday, *Green Eggs and Ham* was shared by all. Students and teachers spent part of the day with Sam as he verbalized his dislike for green eggs and ham. The school community wore green and giggled and wondered why Sam would have to eat green eggs. The students also learned about how to handle being offered food that is different than what they usually eat.

On Wednesday, Three Bridges School participated in a district-wide Hat Day. The students at TBS heard Mrs. Higgins read, *Tiara's Hat Parade* by Kelly Starling Lyons, as they donned their favorite or silliest hats. This book introduced the children to the skilled occupation of a milliner, a person who makes hats, while they explored the effects that a large corporate

store can have on a small shop. This story had a happy ending as the citizens realized what they had with their small, private shop.

On Thursday, *Fox in Socks* visited the children through the iconic book. The school was abuzz with excitement as we all shared our silly socks. This is a traditional Read Across America activity that all enjoy!

Friday wrapped up a fun week! We focused on the book, *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow. This book uses poetry and beautiful illustrations to share the unique qualities of people's names. This book takes the time to celebrate how our names reflect our heritage and family experiences. We shared our school spirit by wearing our school shirts and colors.

Reading is such a wonderful gift you can give your children. Please remember that the time you spend reading to your child sets him or her up for reading success in life and creates lasting memories of a wonderful time spent with parent and child.

To peruse an interesting article about reading with your child, click [here](#). Looking for more elementary reading material? Please visit [TBS Library Virtual Reading Rooms](#).

“You’re never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child.” “You can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a book.” “Reading can take you places you have never been before.” – Dr. Seuss

Photos from Three Bridges School Celebrations:



Angel Casiano - Socks



Barry Sheldon - Green Eggs & Ham



Oliver Fasulo - Spirit Day



Mrs. Pierro



Mrs. Romano



Mrs. Higgins

Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Events:

- March 11-12 / Early Dismissal Days – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- March 19 / Schools OPEN – Snow Make-up Day
- March 22 / Schools Closed – In-Service Day
- March 24 / SEL Parent Event
- March 31 / Superintendent Virtual Coffee Chat
- April 1 / Early Dismissal Day – Spring Recess
- April 2-9 Schools Closed – Spring Recess

Upcoming BOE Meetings:

- March 16, April 13, April 27, May 4, May 18



"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up this diminishes fears; knowing what must be done does away with fear." – Rosa Parks