

The Superintendent Sentinel | PARENT NEWSLETTER

January 2021



Message from the Superintendent

Happy New Year and welcome to 2021! I am hopeful the winter break provided your family with rest and relaxation. It's hard to believe that we are already into the year 2021. When the clock struck midnight early on January 1, 2021 there seemed to be a sigh of relief and a hope for the year that lay ahead. 2020 was difficult for many and this new year brings rejuvenation for all. Our district sets its sights on forging forward in 2021 hopefully seeing broader in-person learning, continued work toward our strategic goals, and a strong finish to our school year. I believe there is light at the end of this long pandemic tunnel where we can return to normal. Please continue to look for my letters, communications, and surveys related to school operations as we continue to move toward the spring and set our sights on the next phase of in-person instruction. The district looks forward to the renewed hope of a new year!

Further, the district has been involved in the preliminary preparations of the 2021-2022 budget. The administration and Board of Education are tasked with developing a budget given the unknowns of state aid and the future of the economic situation amid the pandemic. In order to deliver a final budget that promotes our strategic plan and strong academic programs, while also being sensitive to the impact on local property taxes, we encourage public involvement. Please consider being part of the process by attending a Board of Education meeting where the budget is discussed. These meetings will be held on February 9, February 23 and March 16.



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

Parent Academy Night – January 26, 2021



Please join Dr. Jonathan Hart and the Curriculum Supervisors on Tuesday, January 26 at 6:00 p.m. for our virtual Parent Academy Night. Conversation Topic: Promoting Inquiry at Home. Pre-registration is required for this event. We will be sharing materials via email prior to the event. Please RSVP to: rsvp@readington.k12.nj.us. For more information and the Google Meet Link, please [click here](#).



Curriculum Corner

The Various Benefits of Virtual Field Trips

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

Historically, field trips are among the most highly anticipated events of a child's school year. Despite our transition to hybrid learning, these important events may still occur. In fact, virtual field trips open a worldwide opportunity for students. Virtual field trips are digital explorations of our world using a collection of technological resources such as images, audio-video clips, animations and sounds. They are an alternative to traditional field trips and create learning opportunities for students without leaving their classroom or home environment.

Virtual field trips enrich student learning in many ways. They connect and compare theoretical knowledge with the real world. Virtual field trips are not limited by distance, time or money and enable students to explore just about anything using the internet. Virtual field trips create a highly interactive experience for students by permitting a bird's view of a location, to zoom in close, or view a 360-degree rotation of an area. They also equip students with the freedom to discover, view and learn at their own pace.

These trips can benefit students of all learning styles. All trips have audio-visually and narratives to guide students, catering to auditory and visual learners. Kinesthetic learners can benefit from trips that allow interaction through manipulating objects by clicking on them. In addition, students can instantly access the most current, diverse and detailed information from various points of view.

Students can continue to engage with the content after turning off their computers through a fun learning activity. Self-reflection, journaling, or artistic representations all offer opportunities to extend learning.

To view the full article regarding virtual field trips, click [HERE](#).

To get started on your first virtual field trip, access the sites below.

[25+ Amazing Virtual Field Trips](#)

[41 Virtual Field Trips for Kids to Get Them Learning About the World](#)

[40+ Free Virtual Field Trips Your Kids Can Take From the Couch](#)



Governor's Educator of the Year Program Honorees / 2020-2021 School Year

We are pleased to announce the Readington Township School District 2020-2021 Governor's Educator of the Year (GEOY) Program recipients. Each of our schools has recognized a Teacher and Educational Services Professional for this prestigious honor.

Readington Middle School: Megan Greco/Math Teacher and Christine Crielly/School Counselor

Holland Brook School: Megan Sloan/Special Education Teacher and Jodi Rehrig/Math Coach

Three Bridges School: Carrie Squire/Special Education Teacher and Anne Romano/Media Specialist

Whitehouse School: Arlene Schlosser/Kindergarten Teacher and Paul Smith/School Counselor

Friendships During COVID

As shared by Screenagers

Screenagers recognizes that many young people are feeling disconnected from friends and at the same time, others have been able to maintain a sense of closeness to friends, if not many, at least a few. And, parents are concerned about our kids in these incredibly challenging social times. Screenagers has discussed with several teachers and school counselors who feel these concerns for their students too. Our kids have the internet to connect with friends, but it sparks worry that they also have all the internet risks. Can you relate to this as a parent? They are no longer talking with friends over an old fashion telephone; now they are dealing with actually

SEEING what they have been left out of, seeing ongoing intense negative news, and the list goes on. Today though, Screenagers wants to suggest we focus on talking with our kids about appreciating any goodness that is happening in their friendships — and how the tech revolution has been helpful.

Screenagers shares ideas to the following questions to spark productive conversations related to friendships, both in general and now, during COVID. Please [click here](#) to view the tips from Screenagers.

What Are the Essential Components of a Strong Friendship?

Have Any Friendships Been Strengthened Recently?

How Are People Making New Friends?

Have You Made Connections with Any Past Friends?

What Social Skills Are Helpful?

Chromebook Technical Support for Students and Parents

Mr. James Belske, District Technology Coordinator
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.
- 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.

“There are three ways to ultimate success. The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind.” – Mr. Rodgers



Child Assault Prevention Program (CAP)

Mr. Anthony Tumolo, Supervisor of SEL and Special Projects

The New Jersey Child Assault Prevention Program (NJCAP) is a state-funded program that seeks to improve school climate, strengthen families and reduce students' vulnerability to assault and bullying. NJCAP is funded through the NJ Department of Children and Families and is supported by the NJ Department of Education with 21 County CAP Offices and over 200 program facilitators. To date, NJCAP has trained over 4 million students, parents and school staff. A teen violence dating prevention component has been developed for older children called Teen CAP. Last year, Christine Crielly, currently a 7th Grade School Counselor at Readington Middle School, wrote a grant to bring this program to our district. The grant was approved for grades 6-8 students, parents, and staff.

The NJCAP presenters were initially slated to provide in-person training in the fall of 2020 to our Readington community, but due to COVID-19 restrictions they have had to adapt their presentations and offerings. They are now able to offer their services and support in a virtual setting, so Mrs. Crielly, with the help of her fellow counseling colleagues and school administrators, established a training schedule for the RMS staff, parents, and students. NJCAP requires and provides mandatory teacher in-service and parent training each lasting one hour in length. These two one-hour trainings have already taken place throughout the fall and all

student lessons will be completed by the end of January.

Feedback from this program has been extremely positive. The middle school's administrators and teachers have reported that the NJCAP Program has empowered the students to stand up and advocate for themselves and others, and to seek out help and support when they need it. This program directly correlates to the district's strategic SEL goal on social awareness. One of the action steps identified by the social awareness strategic planning committee relates to an increase in mental health education throughout the district. NJCAP is just one avenue that supports this effort.

This program has been such a success that Mrs. Crielly is working with district and building administrators to bring it to grades 3-5 students, staff, and parents in the spring of 2021. Once mandatory staff and parent training have been completed for the entire district, we will have flexibility on how we want NJCAP to support our students moving forward. In the past, Readington Schools have designed the program for grades 2, 4, 6, and 8. We are grateful this program exists in New Jersey and we hope that we can continue to partner with NJCAP for many years to come.

To learn more about the NJCAP program and network please visit www.njcap.org.

Parent SEL Event – January 20, 2021



Please join us on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for our second virtual Parent SEL Event. Conversation topic: Tips & Strategies on what Social Emotional Learning looks like in and out of the classroom. For more information and the Google Meet link, please [click here](#).

Building Spotlight: Holland Brook School

Mr. Paul Nigro, Principal



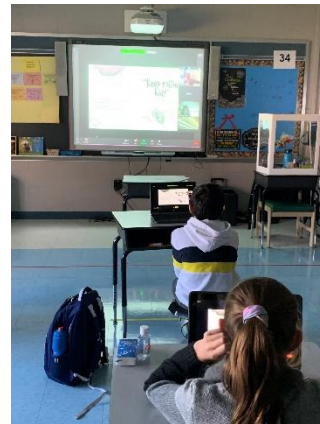
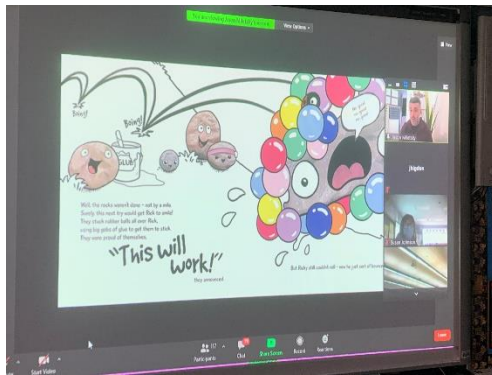
HBS students put on their friendship hats this past fall as they read *Ricky, the Rock that Couldn't Roll*, by Mr. Jay, and participated in various cross-curricular activities. This SEL lesson began with a reading of the book with their homeroom (you can read the book with Mrs. Pauley [here.](#)) The themes of the book include friendship, perseverance, and inclusion; these are character traits we work to instill in our students. Students reflected on what they heard through writing activities and classroom discussion.

The lesson continued on November 17th with a special presentation to the entire school by Mr. Jay, the author of *Ricky, the Rock that Couldn't Roll*. In a one-hour personal Zoom presentation,

students learned the inspiration behind the book, Mr. Jay's daughter who has cerebral palsy. (You can see a quick recap of Mr. Jay's story [here.](#)) Students were engaged and had many questions about the writing, illustrating, and meaning of the book.

Students created their own personal rocks representing their uniqueness as the final part of this school-wide SEL activity. These rocks came from the HBS property and were painted or colored by students in art class; they are now on display in the school's trophy case located in the entry hallway. Virtual students were offered to go packages so they too could design their own rock. This was an inspiring experience for all!

Photos from HBS *Ricky, the Rock that Couldn't Roll* Day



Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Events:

- January 18 / Schools Closed – Martin Luther King Day
- January 20 / SEL Parent Event
- January 26 / Parent Academy Night
- February 3 / Superintendent Virtual Coffee Chat
- February 12 / Early Dismissal Day
- February 15 / Schools Closed – Presidents Day
- February 22-23 / Kindergarten Registration

Upcoming BOE Meetings:

- January 19, February 5, February 23, March 16

