

Table of Content
 Superintendent's Message.....p1
 Borough Schoolp2
 Mountain Wayp3
 Curriculump4
 Technology & Enrichment....p5
 Guidance.....p5

**Superintendent's Corner:
Mr. Mark Maire**

As we approach the midway point of the school year, it is important to reflect on our district's progress. We have implemented many new initiatives and goals throughout the current school year. Our staff has been working diligently to implement and support all of these essential 21st century competencies. Our student learners have embraced changes to the curriculum, and they are effectively utilizing the new instructional resources as we continue to expand their repertoire of skills. Below are some highlights of the current school year:

- Successful implementation of 1:1 Chromebook program at Borough
- Curriculum work to support Social Studies, Science, and 21st Century Learning.
- Creation of Morris County Consortium with neighboring districts that produced numerous shared service opportunities
- Monthly theme-based character education assemblies at Mtn. Way
- Integration of Words Their Way and Writer's Workshop
- Development of Long-Range Facility Plan
- Enriching Minds program
- Reading Plan Committee

As a district, we are resolved to continue to offer an optimal learning environment for all of our students. We look forward to our continued partnership with our community.

Message From MP Board President - Maria Manley



(Not pictured: Mr. Bober and Mrs. Kaag)

Happy New Year from the Morris Plains Board of Education! We look forward to a new year of learning and working together. We would like to welcome back incumbents Terri Kaag and Lucia Galdi and newly elected to a three year term, Ken Wilbur. The Board is excited to announce a new committee, chaired by Anthony Galdi, that will enhance district-wide communication.

On January 28th and 29th, board members Mrs. Galdi, Mrs. Kaag, and Mrs. Manley attended the Techspo state technology convention in Atlantic City. Attendance in part was to show their support for Mr. Andrew Kramar and Mrs. Christine Lion-Bailey, who presented a workshop on "Making Google Work" for educational leaders. The presentation was fantastic and well received by the audience with standing room only.

Our entire school community is truly a great place to be proud of. We welcome our community to Board of Education meetings which typically meet the first and third Tuesday of every month.

PARCC Results

Last year, Morris Plains' Borough students in grades 3 – 8 participated in the first administration of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test. The PARCC test aligns with Common Core standards and requires that students read digital text, write analytically, provide reasoning for math solutions, and think deeper about math and literacy content.

Results from the 2015 assessments can be found on the district's website, under "Quick Links." PARCC test results for Literacy and Math show that our students outperformed their peers at the state level at every grade level by as much as 25 percentage points. Additionally, our scores were extremely competitive against high-achieving districts. These are outstanding results for our students and for the dedicated teachers who work with them every day. As a first year assessment, our baseline will be high!

This year's PARCC test will consist of only one cycle of testing this year, unlike two from last year. It is our hope that those who chose to have their children not take the PARCC in 2014-2015 will permit them to participate in 2015-2016. The data provides us with information to improve instruction and instructional programs, measure achievement, and chart student progress.

2016-2017 Budget

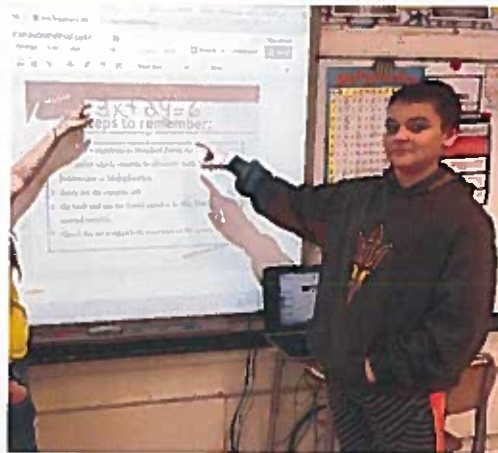
We are working intensely on the preparation of the proposed budget for the 2016-2017 school year. The proposed school budget will address some of the following areas: Increase in student devices at Mountain Way, the integration of STEM and Innovation courses at Borough School, expansion of classroom libraries, reading intervention programs (K-8), security and safety, hallways and classrooms (painting and LED lighting), construction and capital projects, and continued support in professional development. A board presentation on the proposed 2016-2017 budget is scheduled for Feb. 23 at 7pm in the Borough School Library.



The Principal's Corner

The 2015-2016 school year is in full swing and Borough School is running on all cylinders. Each and every day our teachers are challenging our students in new and innovative ways. In all grades students are being challenged as developing writers through our new Writer's Workshop initiative in our language arts classes. In science, our students are being engaged in hands-on, discovery based, activities to support the NGSS. In social studies, students are being exposed to a variety of new resources through our new TechBook resource and partnership with Discovery Education. In math, our sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are taking advantage of the additional class time the new schedule affords all students.

We would like to take this opportunity to make everyone aware of our upcoming PARCC assessment dates. This year we will be testing during *one* timeframe, rather than two. All students in every grade will begin testing the week of April 25th (makeups May 5th-13th). Students will only be tested one session per day, limiting the impact on the school day. At the conclusion of testing, all students will return to their normal daily routine. More information will be disseminated to all Borough families as we get closer to the PARCC test administration.



Students as Teachers

In Mrs. Bregman's math classes students are continuing to write and create their "teaching" presentations using various online tools including Google Slides, Prezi, Powtoons and Google Sites. Students are creating their "teaching" slides for each unit where they are teaching each concept per unit and how to solve problems step-by-step. They are also writing their own real-world word problems based on the unit concepts and applying it to their career or passion. They are teaching fellow students how to solve problems and how to compute different problems that they create. In addition, they create their own Kahoots for their fellow students to answer. They enjoy taking ownership of their own learning!

Math Happenings

Borough School is excited to continue its collaborative relationship with PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), a financial services company. PWC is committed to helping students become financially literate. For the past three years staff from PWC have visited the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade math classrooms to bring real world financial lessons to our students. This year eighth graders learned about investments by completing a stock market simulation. Seventh graders engaged in activities that dealt with saving for the future and sixth graders learned to analyze advertisements for misleading information. A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Sullivan, Mrs. Drake, and Mrs. Schorno for opening their doors and embracing these type of real world learning opportunities for our students.



Borough School Celebrates Annual Spirit Week

During the week of January 18th Borough School celebrated its annual Spirit Week, coordinated by our student council, students were encouraged to dress up in a variety of styles and themes (alphabet day, semi-formal day, a place I love day, maroon/white day). The week culminated with our pep rally where our entire student body got together to celebrate our basketball teams and cheerleading squad. This year, the students had an opportunity to "tape Mr. Frankosky to the wall." This was a fundraiser for the sixth grade camping trip and as you can see from the picture on the left, it was a huge success. Mr. Frankosky is thanked for volunteering and giving us his body in the name of raising money for our students!

Reading to the Principal

As you know, reading is a very important skill at Mountain Way. In addition to learning the skills of decoding and comprehension it is important that we do our best to foster a love for reading.

One way that we motivate the students at Mountain Way is to provide them with an opportunity to read to the principal.

Students make appointments through their classroom teachers to read to the principal following the morning announcements. The students select their favorite book and then sit down in the principal's office to showcase their skills.

After each student reads, there is a special procedure that takes place. A certificate signed by the principal is given to the



student an a picture is taken that includes the student and the principal. The students look forward to this opportunity and so does the principal.



STEM/ILAB Happenings at Mountain Way!!

The S.T.E.M. Career day assembly program that took place on January 28 was a huge success at Mountain Way! Mr. Vyas, Ms. Vel, Mr. Venditti, Ms. Kitchell, and Mr. Leeds, all Mountain Way parents, join Mrs. Demetrician following the program. The parents shared slides and spoke about their professions to the students. The professions all aligned with S.T.E.M. which integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The children enjoyed the program and everyone learned a great deal from the presentations.

Abraham Lincoln Program

The Abraham Lincoln program at Mountain Way developed over the course of a couple of weeks. The classic book entitled, "Just Like Abraham Lincoln" by Bernard Waber was read to each class by the Mountain Way Interim Principal.

The key word that the students learned was "Lincolnphile." A "Lincolnphile" is a person that greatly admires and wants to learn as much as possible about Abraham Lincoln. After the book was read to all of the classes, we had over 100 "Lincolnphiles" at Mountain Way!

The program came to a grand conclusion when Abraham Lincoln made a surprise appearance at Mountain Way. During an assembly program everyone was instructed to close their eyes and imagine they were back in time over 150 years ago. Abraham Lincoln (in the person of actor Richard Waddingham) then stepped forward and asked everyone to open their eyes. The children were astonished to see Abraham Lincoln standing in front of them.



Everyone learned a great deal about the 16th President and it will be a day that the students will remember for a long time.

Habits of Mind



Character education is emphasized in an ongoing manner throughout the school year at Mountain Way. The theme for the month of January is "Thinking Interdependently." The second grade students joined Dr. Gamble in a skit to help bring home the meaning of the January theme. The students did show many examples of teamwork. The theme for February is "Finding Humor." The Cat in the Hat along with the second grade students will help to bring home this month's character trait.

Writers' Workshop Update

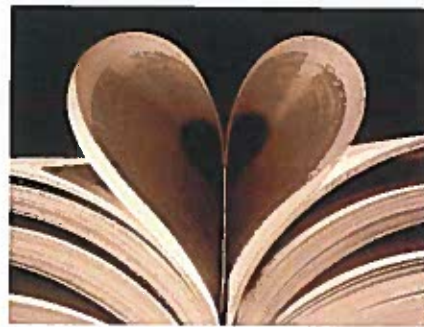
What should I write about? How do I begin? How do I end a story? What makes a story interesting?

These are some of the questions that enter the minds of our young people as they approach the task of writing.

At Morris Plains, our students are becoming more prolific and skillful with their writing because they are beginning to believe in themselves as being writers.

Thanks to the implementation of an approach to writing called "Writers' Workshop" the students are thinking like writers. The various components of the writing process are addressed during mini lessons, independent writing, and formal / informal conferencing. Published pieces are shared with audiences.

The school district's writing consultant, Mrs. Patty McGee, addressed the topic of Writers' workshop at a recent Literacy Night that was open to all of the parents. Approximately 20 people attended this very informative event. Excellent questions were posed and the writing process was explained in a great deal of detail. Everyone came away from this meeting with a better understanding of the writing process.



Reading Program Committee

The school district's reading Program committee has met three times to date.

The charge of the committee is "To further enhance the Morris Plains School district's balanced reading program through the recommendation of the implementation of additional reading intervention programs and diagnostic tools."

We know that there is not one program that can be said to be the "magic bullet" for all students who struggle with reading. However, there are a few guiding principles that will help us identify and implement effective strategies. These principles include...

the need for phonological awareness, the development of the alphabetic principle, explicit phonic instruction, word study, the development of fluency, and concept imagery.

The committee consists of staff members from both schools and the above principles will help to guide the committee's research and progress.

Assessment is Teaching

Assessment is most effective when it is ongoing and formative. We have talked about this at faculty meetings at Mountain Way and this will be the topic of discussion at an upcoming Borough faculty meeting.

We define assessment as gathering information and there are multiple ways to do this in the classroom. Specific strategies are discussed along with ways to effectively organize the data.

As educators we know that we not only need to gather the data but we also need to do something with it.

Descriptive feedback is a key component that comes from the data and teachers work on the most appropriate ways to deliver this feedback to the students.

The bottom line is that we need to make sure that instruction is delivered and adjusted in the most meaningful and effective manner. We will continue to address this critical topic and continue to evaluate the best possible diagnostic tools that will serve to increase student achievement.

Fast ForWord Parent Information Meeting



There are 12 students that are beginning to work on a reading intervention program called Fast ForWord. This program utilizes the research in the area of neuroscience to help children process language and become more efficient at decoding words. The program is web based so the students are able to work on the program both at school and at home. The parents of the children using the program attended an informational session that demonstrated the components of the program and provided them with a better understanding of how children learn to read.

Fast ForWord is a reading intervention program that was reviewed and discussed at the district's Reading Program committee meetings.

iPads at Mountain Way

All of our Mountain Way classrooms are officially equipped with 10 iPads (per classroom) that are synced to a cloud-based management system. This enormous project, which was completed in early January, allows for us to push apps out to entire grade levels of devices, providing all students the opportunity to work with apps appropriate to their grade level. The teachers at Mountain Way have been working diligently to identify new and innovative apps to enhance the learning experiences in the classrooms. From centers to pair work, students are benefiting on a regular basis from the infusion of the iPads into instruction at Mountain Way. As we enter into the second half of the school year, the intention is to have students begin to transform into producers of technology rather than consumers of technology. Each grade level team is currently working with the Supervisor of Technology & Enrichment to identify, plan, and implement a project based learning opportunity in which students will be using the iPads, and other technology, to create a product of their learning. We are looking forward to the results of these projects.



Enriching Minds

The Enriching Minds Program kicked off the school year with great success. Our Fall 2015 session featured five courses and our Winter 2016 session is currently running with nine course! The Winter 2016 session features course topics including Chemistry, Fun Colors, Rube Goldberg Machines, Cheer, Math Games, Robotics, Mini Chefs, and Adventures of Flat Stanley. The program has almost doubled in size since the Fall as students engage in these exciting and enriching afterschool programs. With the Spring 2016 registration just around the corner, teachers are beginning to plan out exciting new course offerings. We look forward to opening registration for the Spring 2016 Enriching Minds session in late March. The session will run for a total of six weeks throughout the months of April, May, and June. For a direct link to our webpage, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/MPSDminds> and stay tuned for Spring registration.

Tech Tools in the Classrooms

Teachers are excitedly integrating new technology based tools each and everyday in their classrooms. I would like to take this opportunity to share some of these innovative tools. Google Tone, being used with many of our Chromebook classrooms, allows teachers to direct students to a particular website by sending out a tone from their device which is detected by the student device and prompts the website to open. This management tool allows teachers to quickly open a webpage for students with little disruption to the lesson. Explain Everything, which is an interactive whiteboard tool, allows students to design their own lesson/presentation, include important information and graphics, and record a voiceover to explain their work. This engaging tool brings student creativity to the forefront of the learning process. Lastly, Kahoot! is a tool that teachers, and student, use to develop interactive reviews of information that engages students in a real time competition of wits and knowledge. Operating from the student device and viewed on the SMARTBoard, Kahoot! is bringing a great deal of excitement to the classrooms in Morris Plains!

Guidance Corner | Brian Wilson, Guidance Counselor K-8|



- Morristown High School will be at Borough next week to finalize our 8th graders high school schedules.
- Congratulations to our 12 applicants accepted into the (STEM) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics academy at Morristown High School. This was a very competitive year!
- I'd also like to congratulate several of our 8th graders who were accepted into private schools for next year. There are so many paths that our students can now follow for high school. It is exciting to see many of them end up with the path that is right for them.
- Next Friday, the 12th, will begin our annual 4th Grade Reading Buddies Character Ed. and Social Skills Program with the Kindergarteners at Mountain Way. Our 4th graders teacher a character ed. lesson and model a social skill each week. On the fourth and final week, the kindergarteners come to us for a special lesson at Borough.
- Next week we will be finalizing the details of a new program to be hosted at Borough School involving the 3rd and 6th graders. SNAP, which stands for Special Needs Athletic and Awareness, will be introduced to our students through my Big and Little Buddies program. The 6th graders will be trained by Mr. Wilson and Amanda Scott, a senior at Morristown High School. I am confident that our students will gain a much better understanding of students with disabilities through these varied experiences. Permission slips will be sent home soon.