



Around Our Schools...

News from South Brunswick District Schools

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

Dear South Brunswick Families,

It is that time of the year again when we say good-bye to the school year and welcome in the sunshine. While the school year has ended, the work never stops and we immediately now go into “off-season” mode. Slower paced for sure, but so much to accomplish in preparation for amazing things in the 2019-2020 school year.

Imagine if every child made the most of every opportunity this summer!

If you read anything coming from my office this year, you have probably latched onto a few things that have been in focus. For the latter part of the year, we have been engaged in developing a rich and cohesive Strategic Plan for the District. We could not have done this important work without all of the feedback received from all of you. Whether you completed a survey, came out to a forum or planning session (8 meetings in all) we learned, listened and acted. [The plan can be seen here.](#)

Imagine if every child dreamed of what was possible and developed a plan to achieve it!

Another topic that was a focus was specific to Equity. The District has always spent time addressing issues of equity and this year we simply took those efforts to new heights. This year we started a community-wide Equity Committee, worked with an Equity Consortium of School Districts, brought in speakers to help us understand possible issues and spent a good deal of time focused on the student performance data that helps us learn about needs, gaps and direction for the District. So much good work, and yet so much more to do.

Imagine if every child was seen for their strengths, gifts, talents and potential!

I conclude this by sharing one of my noticings. Every school district, and every organization for that matter, develops its own personality. South Brunswick is no different and it has a big personality that consistently has demonstrated what matters most. I can say with confidence and pride that this School District has a personality that shows care for one another, takes pride in its students’ successes and values the families and town as partners. It remains my honor to serve this great community and being part of the system educating the future.

*Imagine if every child was loved by its community, school and neighbor!
Let’s together make sure this is not something to imagine, but rather something we live each day.*

Be well, enjoy the summer and we will see you next September..

Sincerely,
Scott Feder
Superintendent of Schools



AROUND OUR SCHOOLS...

We hope you enjoy this first edition of “Around our Schools”. The purpose of this publication is to share with the District all of the wonderful things that go on in each of our buildings during the school year.

We hope you enjoy and have a wonderful and safe summer...



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SUMMER HOURS

School buildings will be open during the summer months on a shortened schedule. Summer Hours will be in effect from July 1 to August 31.

Elementary School Summer Hours – During the summer months beginning July 1, all elementary schools will be open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Middle School and High School Summer Hours – During the summer months beginning July 1, the middle and high school will be open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

CROSSROADS NORTH'S "HAPPY FRIDAYS"



The entire staff at North participates in offering a variety of clubs

Crossroads North has developed an interest-based clubs program for their entire student body that they have named "Happy Friday". Allison DuBois, Assistant Principal, worked with a team of staff members to develop the program.

for their students. There are more than forty different offerings that range from academic to the arts, athletic and other interests.

Students go to their clubs on Fridays in lieu of their normal HAP. Clubs are mixed across grades and units. Students were surveyed and given one of their top three choices as their club.

"Happy Fridays" was piloted during the third trimester this year, and they look to continue the program next year.

"Crossroads North has developed an interest-based clubs program for their entire student body that they have named "Happy Friday".



MONMOUTH JUNCTION PARTNERED WITH THE SOUTH BRUNSWICK POLICE DEPARTMENT TO BENEFIT THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

On June 7th, Monmouth Junction partnered with the South Brunswick Police Department on their annual Torch Run to raise money for the Special Olympics. This has quickly become a beloved tradition for the Monmouth Junction students and staff.



On the day of the Torch Run, students dress in red to show school spirit and then line the back fields of the school while they stand shoulder to shoulder to cheer the police officers on! Students from two winning classes are awarded the honor of escorting the police officers (*and the Torch!*) by running alongside them. *This event raises money for a great cause, brings our students and staff together, and allows us to strengthen our partnership with the police department.*



The event is FUN, but more importantly, it reinforces important lessons for students about giving back and respecting the differences among us. It's a wonderful "win-win" event for all involved!

“OPENING DOORS TO SECONDARY CONVERSATIONS: SEEING LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE”

by Dr. Maribeth Edmunds, Director of Secondary Education

For the last three years, we have offered middle school and high school teachers a chance to see what life is like on *the other side*. By this I mean an opportunity for them to step out of their daily work environments and see what teaching and learning looks like at another level in our district. For many teachers, this was the first time they had an opportunity to visit the high school or middle school and visit others' classrooms.

To do so, we established a cross-divisional walk-through protocol for visiting other teachers' classrooms, safely and respectfully, with an eye towards better understanding students' K-12 educational journey. This initiative has been an exciting part of our vertical articulation goal at South Brunswick.

New this year was an opportunity for co-teaching teams to spend a day at either the high school or middle school in co-teaching classrooms. Sixteen teachers (eight from the middle school and eight from the high school) visited the 'other side' and had a full day to listen, watch, learn, and then debrief their experiences seeing in-class support and in-class resource students at work with their teachers.

These visits were a revelation, dispelling much of the 'mythology' about what actually takes place at other levels versus what they believed takes place. It also helped to strengthen our district's

efforts to make co-teaching more successful for our special education students.

Purpose:

The purpose of these non-evaluative visitations, therefore, was to provide first-hand insights that prompt professional conversation around what comes before and what comes after the pivotal transition grades. Our process revolved around classroom expectations and how students interact with curriculum at different levels. We looked at a number of protocols and decided to use 'Classroom X' that we adapted from UCLA's School Management Program. Here is a description of the protocol:

“UCLA Classroom Walk-Through is a protocol used by teachers to watch students at work and then to debrief their noticings in order to identify patterns of successful learning... During the post-walk-through debriefing, participants identify patterns of practice that result in high levels of student learning and trends in student data that suggest areas for professional inquiry. The art of questioning in professional inquiry is practiced to build trust, provide new perspectives, and establish priorities for focused, collaborative action for school or district initiatives.”

Prior to teachers visiting others' classrooms, we conducted a training to help prepare them. This consisted of the following:

the protocol, data collection forms, norms when inside the classrooms, logistics, and debriefing our experiences together at the end of the day. The emphasis was on watching students to see what they do and what they say.

For many teachers, these visitations were eye-opening, and led to new understandings about students' abilities. Of course, many questions arose about how we can make the learning journey for our students seamless. Here are some of their takeaways from their “*day on the other side!*”

Reflections:

- Teachers were open to visiting others for a fresh look on teaching strategies;
- Classrooms were more structured than they thought;
- Many positives were shared;
- They had compassion for new high school students;
- It is eye-opening to know where they're coming from;
- Teachers would like to do this more often, especially for seasoned teachers; and
- There were a lot of 'ah-ha' moments.

All of us on the vertical articulation committee are excited about this initiative and delighted about its success. We're confident that we will learn much at our district through this collaborative experience together.

BRUNSWICK ACRES CELEBRATES AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH



At Brunswick Acres, we dedicate time every April to celebrate Autism Awareness month. The whole staff buys new t-shirts every year to honor the celebration. This April, our staff in the Autism program created a variety of activities for the whole school to participate in.

All our students took part in a scavenger hunt around the school, and they were leveled for the different grade levels. There were prizes for every student who completed the scavenger hunt! On April 18th we hosted the Light it Up Blue Quiz Show. The school was broken into team colors with representatives from every grade level stepping up to answer quiz show questions with facts about Autism. Not surprisingly, our students got almost every question right! However, fastest fingers came into play, and our winning team had the fastest responses.

The students had a great time celebrating and learning about the gifts all of our students bring to us. We are so proud of the intelligent, inclusive community we have at Brunswick Acres.



MIDDLE STATES ACCREDITATION AT SBHS

by Maribeth Edmunds, Director of Secondary Education

South Brunswick High School has an excellent reputation. Be it academics, athletics, or the arts, our students are high achievers. Teachers and administrators work hard to help students explore their talents, perfect their skills, and prepare for the world upon graduation. It's a tall task.

So, how does a school earn such a reputation? What factors play into this success? One factor of our success has been meeting a set of rigorous standards that leads to earning accreditation from the Middle States Association.

What is the Middle States Association, and why is accreditation important?

The Middle States Association, located in Philadelphia, PA, is one of 7 regional accrediting agencies that are recognized by the United States Department of Education. MSA serves Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia as well as over 100 countries around the world. This agency has been accrediting South Brunswick High School for many years.

According to the Middle States Association, "Accreditation is a self-evaluation process that schools and school systems voluntarily use to demonstrate they are meeting a defined set of research-based performance standards. The standards examine schools in a holistic way, supplementing student-testing data to provide a more complete measure of a school's performance and chart a strategic and realistic course for continuous school improvement."

A primary advantage of using a Middle States' protocol is that it helps a school establish and reach goals through the development of a strategic plan. Our protocol this

year is entitled "Excellence by Design." Essentially, this protocol is a guide for self-study.

Process:

Because our accreditation cycle must be renewed every seven years, South Brunswick High School's Planning Team* began its self-study last fall. We engaged all faculty members in a review of our existing documents on our PD Day in November. These Foundation Documents are as follows: (a) Mission Statement, (b) Belief Statements, and (c) Profile of a Graduate. There were lively debates among staff about our hopes and dreams for our students, which resulted in updated documents representing our collective thoughts.

Following the work with teachers, we conducted similar meetings with a variety of stakeholders, i.e. parents, students, administrators, Board members, and community members. We also conducted the standards survey that is required by MSA with all our stakeholder groups. As a result, our new mission statement reads as follows:

The South Brunswick High School Community values the pursuit of excellence, diversity through acceptance, and a safe and supportive learning environment. SBHS empowers students to develop character, skills, and perseverance as they explore their passions and prepare for the future.

Another big step in the process was to create measurable objectives. After much deliberation, the Planning Team devised the following areas for strategic objectives based on a data review:

- a) Struggling Learners;
- b) Dual Enrollment; and
- c) Mental Health and Wellness of Students and Staff.

Each of these objectives will have a full action plan for implementation over the next seven years.

Site Visitation by a Validation Team of Peers

In the fall of 2019, a team of peers will visit the high school and validate the self-study, the objectives, and the action plans. After their review, the team will make a recommendation to Middle States regarding our accreditation status.

Accreditation attests to the fact that the school held itself up to scrutiny through an internal process and then by an external third party group of reviewers. Accreditation success is noted on our students' transcripts and is a nationally recognized indicator of a quality education. Accreditation is a benefit for our school and one that supports our reputation.

We are fortunate that South Brunswick's Board of Education supports accreditation. This year, our Middle States process coincided with the district's overarching strategic plan. As such, our plans are aligned. Together, we can move South Brunswick into the future with our students in mind.

*Members of the Planning Team:

Jeffrey Rumen and Shawn Renales, Internal Coordinators
Jaymee Boehmer, Thomas Decker,
Dr. Maribeth Edmunds, Theresa Jennings, Richard Kirk, Kristin Laskin, Matthew Kostovny, Jaclyn Trippe, Peter Varela, and Emily Wright.

INDIAN FIELDS & DAYTON STUDENTS SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR AUTISM



On Thursday, April 18th Indian Fields and Dayton students joined together in a big circle outside to show their support and acceptance for Autism by wearing blue and filling the air with bubbles. This was a great way to raise awareness and bring the student body together. This was the first year of participating in Bubbles4Autism and we hope this event will become a tradition. Although it was a chilly day, the [video](#) makes it clear that all students enjoyed Bubbles4Autism.



SNAPSHOT ON SUMMER READING FROM OUR LIBRARIANS



This summer, the South Brunswick school librarians are enthusiastic about supporting student readers and working closely with the public librarians to get students excited about reading. [Please click here for a snapshot of summer reading plans throughout the District.](#)

Contact your local school librarian for more information on summer reading at your school.



CROSSROADS SOUTH VISITS THE COMMUNITY



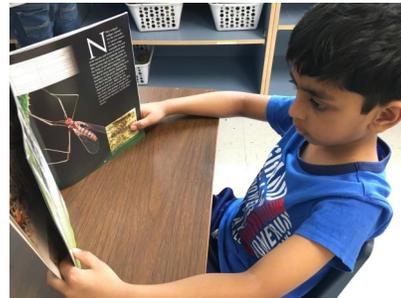
This year, Crossroads South was proud to start a new initiative to connect with our families. Using the district theme as inspiration, we began sharing our own ending, "Imagine if Every Child...felt connected to school!" While many parents and families have the best intentions to come to the school for events, sometimes all of our schedules do not align. Therefore, as we brainstormed ideas of how to better reach our community, a new idea was hatched, "Bringing South Home!" We decided to bring our school to the town and visit a few neighborhoods from each of our sending elementary schools. On a Sunday afternoon in the fall, over 35 teachers and staff members from

Crossroads South Middle School joined our caravan into the community. "Bringing South Home!" was a plan to visit our families across South Brunswick. Teachers brought treats, crafts, music, and fun to each visit. We were able to meet families and build relationships. One student, who was out of school for a while due to illness was even able to be driven over to say hello to his teachers. As the year closes, we are proud of this initiative and the support from our staff and community. We look forward to more events next school year and maybe even a summer visit to say hello to all of our families! Stay tuned!

YOU'RE FAMOUS IF YOU READ AT CONSTABLE



This year at Constable, students were "caught reading" and the photos were posted on our school's Facebook page ([fb.com/sbsdco](https://www.facebook.com/sbsdco)). At various times throughout the year, students would be thoroughly entrenched in reading and we wanted to share this awesome moment. After their photo was taken, they became famous with many people seeing their picture on the school's Facebook page. Students are excited to know their photo will be posted online for their family and friends to see.



During Read Across America week, we also posted photos of students and staff members who dropped everything to read. At Constable, we value the importance of developing lifelong readers. We love sharing this on our Facebook page and seeing the excitement students, families, friends, and staff members have. Give it a try yourself. Take a photo of your child fully engaged in reading and share it proudly. We are proud of our readers at Constable!



KINDNESS ROCKS AT GB!

This year at Greenbrook our school theme was "Kindness Rocks." This theme permeated all we did at Greenbrook this year. It inspired our "Kindness Tuesdays" T-shirt days where students and staff were encouraged to wear shirts with "kind or positive" sayings.

Students were then featured on our school walls, demonstrating our year long commitment to highlighting this important trait. "Kindness Rocks" also inspired our assembly theme where "Everybody Counts" and students wore shirts with numbers on them. And finally, it inspired our kindness rock garden. Each student and staff member got to paint a "kindness rock" which was then placed by our Greenbrook School sign. All of these efforts helped to keep this theme alive and well throughout the year. And, because "kindness" is such an important trait, stay tuned for a continuation of this theme next year at Greenbrook!



SBHS CONCERT CHOIR PERFORMS IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND CARNEGIE HALL



The SBHS Concert Choir performed in Washington, DC over the Memorial Day weekend. They gave a concert at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with the US Air Force Symphony Orchestra and began the nationally televised National Memorial Day parade.

In addition, they were joined by the Chorale and sang at Carnegie Hall in New York City for the tenth year in a row! The choir was part of a performance of Poulenc's "Gloria." The group received a standing ovation for their performance.



21 SBHS SENIORS EARN NEW JERSEY STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY

This year, 21 graduating SBHS students earned the New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy by demonstrating that they are able to speak, read, listen and write in two or more languages at a high level of proficiency. In order for students to be eligible to receive the Seal of Biliteracy, they must meet the following criteria: students must demonstrate a proficiency level of *Intermediate Mid* in a World Language, and students must demonstrate proficiency in English by meeting State high school graduation requirements in English.

This past March, students completed the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL), a performance assessment of standards-based language learning

across the three modes of communication, Interpersonal, Presentational, and Interpretive. Their results were submitted to the NJ Department of Education for review and as a result, twenty-one 12th graders qualified as well as eight 11th graders who prequalified for next year. This year's languages included French, Spanish and Chinese.

The Seal of Biliteracy seeks to encourage students to study languages, certify attainment of biliteracy, provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills, provide universities with a method to recognize applicants seeking admission, prepare students with 21st century skills, recognize and promote second language instruction in public schools,



strengthen intergroup relationships, affirm the value of diversity, and honor the multiple cultures and language of a community.

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL HAS THEIR FIRST BOOK TASTING



Cambridge Elementary School had their first book tasting this year.

Students and parents got to "taste" books from different genres and take home their favorites.



OUR WEBSITE HAS GOTTEN A NEW LOOK



This year our website got a new look and we are currently working to improve its usability.

The Technology Department has been hard at work in making our website more user friendly.

We would love to hear from you... If you have any issues with the new website or suggestions, please go to the following link:

https://www.sbschools.org/website_link_errors