

## Black Horse Pike Regional School District August 2014 Update

### CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Students entering into 9<sup>th</sup> grade will be working under a Grade Point Average system that considers the weight of a numeric grade, not just the letter grade equivalent. For instance, if a student earns an 81%, it will be calculated in the GPA as a “B- (minus)”, not as previously calculated as a “B”.

The Common Core State Standards will be infused through cross-curricular collaborations and designed lessons for both literacy and mathematics expectations. Students will be challenged to engage with higher level texts and critically construct solutions to challenging, yet relative problems. Please visit our Curriculum tab on our main District website page for more information.

We are aligning our curriculum and best instructional practices with our sending districts as well. We have a series of articulation meetings planned with Bellmawr, Runnemede and Gloucester Township School Districts to better align our curricula relative to the Common Core State Standards and assessment practices.

We are posting a District-wide assessment calendar on our website so that students, parents and teachers know when a school, state or national test is assigned. This more efficient communication will enable all involved to plan better for an improved student experience.

### VISITOR MANAGEMENT & SECURITY PLANS

All visitors, upon entering the building, must report to the sign in desk and will be required to present a valid state-issued form of identification (driver's license.) The license will be scanned by the Lobby Guard system and the visitor's name and birth date will be checked against the National Sex Offender Public Registry Database and any court order that limits or terminates parental/custodial rights. If the visitor is verified as a registered sex offender and is a parent or legal guardian or an individual who is visiting the school for a legitimate business purpose (for example vendor supplies), entry to the building will be permitted in a limited capacity and may require supervision in accordance with all applicable laws.

This visitor management system enables us to better protect the students and staff. Moreover, in the event there is an emergency, we know exactly who is in the building, where and for what purpose. Every year our administrators work with the Gloucester Township and Runnemede Police Departments to discuss our emergency management pro-active strategies and response to emergencies. This summer we expanded that discussion to the Office of Emergency Management and Camden County College for the purpose of refining our emergency plans. Again, this added step enables our staff in coordination with emergency response personnel to better protect the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

### RENOVATION PROJECTS

The Black Horse Pike Regional School District is in the process of replacing the last quarter of the Triton Regional High School roof and replacing all of the 46 year old windows at Highland Regional High School. In both projects, the school district will remove outdated inefficiencies with more efficient products, which will lower the school district's carbon footprint by decreasing heating and air conditioning costs. Both projects are starting on July 25, 2014 and will continue through the fall of 2014. This may cause minor and infrequent adjustments in student schedules as some classrooms will be effected by the construction. We expect that 50% or greater of the cost of these projects will come from grant funding, which enabled us to pursue these facility upgrades.

We also expect the grand opening of our new state-of-the-art Engineering and Robotics Classroom at Highland Regional High School. Highland High School had an automotive program that ran for over 35 years, but since 2008, the classroom was used for storage. Over the past two years, a planning phase was initiated by Superintendent Repici and Supervisor Glenn Smith to convert the automotive classroom into a

21st Century Engineering and Robotics Laboratory. The classroom will be outfitted with laser engravers, 3D technology prototype designer and 30 computers with Computer Aided Design software. Students will be using the classroom starting this September 2014.

### HOMEROOM SHIFT

The school schedule has been adjusted to eliminate the homeroom period, and yet utilize 6 minutes at the end of second period for announcements, news programs and distribution of information. Technology allows us to pursue this shift in scheduling because taking attendance is completed via our Student Information System, which is an intra-net devised network. This slight change increases instructional time throughout the day. Students will be expected to be ready to learn at 7:25am, which is 10 minutes after arriving to the school.

### CAFETERIA OPTIONS

Like other school districts, our students and parents will be able to utilize our school district's web portal to fund their child's lunch purchases. This web portal will be available on each school's website.

Additionally, after speaking with many students last year, they wished to have a salad bar available to offer healthier lunch options. I am excited to inform our students that we will be offering a salad bar in each school this Fall. We will also experiment with *Meatless Mondays*; an idea borne from our GREEN TEAM students in recognition that raising beef cattle is a really expensive and wasteful enterprise that withers our natural resources. Please review our lunch menu each month to see what the cafeteria has planned for this school year.

### GREEN EFFORTS

Conservation is a point of pride in our school district. Some of the more recent changes we have invested in will save paper, electricity, ink, postage, and water. Here are the changes we made this summer:

- Paperless and postage-free payroll;
- Replacing inefficient lighting sources with LED, more efficient light fixtures; Check out Highland High School's hallways and Timber Creek High School's gymnasium.
- Opening of an organic garden at Timber Creek High School. The two other high schools have organic garden plans in process.
- Diamond grinded our school floors instead of using chemical strippers. Not only is this brightening the flooring, it is better for the environment as well.
- Every vent was cleaned and replaced to improve our indoor air quality.
- New sawdust collectors have been installed at Timber Creek, Triton, and Highland to improve the indoor air quality in our workshops.
- We initiated a compost recycling program in every cafeteria, so that students and staff can discard food waste in compostable bins, thereby reducing the amount of waste (and cost). The compost is usable in gardens, which will be provided to us for our very own organic gardens.

We continue to assess the progress of our current programs, analyze our student outcomes and research ways to improve the students' experience. Please continue to check our website for updates.

Yours in education,

Dr. Brian Repici