

# Flemington - Raritan Regional School District

## News & Notes from the Superintendent's Desk

December 2011-February 2012

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### About News & Notes

*News & Notes* is all about our students and our team here in the Flemington-Raritan School District.

Together, we are all working hard, focusing on our tasks, meeting our deadlines and looking ahead to what will face us in the future.

But as we embrace tomorrow's challenges, it is important to recognize how far we've come, how much we've achieved and how proud we are to be a part of this district. All of us play a significant role here at FRSD. Each of us contributes to every student's educational journey through our schools.

*News & Notes* celebrates achievements, highlights initiatives and shares our progress. But, more importantly, it showcases our students and our special teachers and staff members that make our schools outstanding and the reason I am so very fortunate to serve as your Superintendent.

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## New Jersey Governor's Teacher Recognition Program Recipients

### 2011-2012 Recipients

Congratulations to the following teachers who received the NJ Governor's Teacher Recognition award this year, representing our district. The annual program honors educators across our district for their outstanding performance. I commend and congratulate:

- Kristen Carthas, Grade 5 — Reading-Fleming
- David Hallinan, Grade 7/8 Math — JP Case
- Jennifer Marino, Health/PE — Robert Hunter
- Laura McConnell, Art — Francis A. Desmares
- Suzanne Petto, Grade 4 — Copper Hill
- Patricia Ramachandran, Math Support Skills — Barley Sheaf

I especially recognized Ms. Laura McConnell, who was named the 2011-2012 District Teacher of the Year! On behalf of the entire district, I thank all of this year's recipients for the valuable contributions they have made to our students and schools.



### 2010-2011 Recipients

Congratulations to the following teachers who received the NJ Governor's Teacher Recognition award last year. Although I missed an opportunity to recognize them publicly last year, it is never too late to honor them for their esteemed achievement. Congratulations to:

- Michelle Adcock, Special Ed.—Robert Hunter
- Brenda Chesseri, Autism — Reading-Fleming
- Kathleen Grunstra, Special Ed. — Desmares
- Lisa Hutchison, Grade 2 — Copper Hill
- Rose Nagy, Vocal Music — J.P. Case
- Kathleen Stalgaitis, Speech/Language — Barley Sheaf

I also recognize Ms. Michelle Adcock, who was named the 2010-2011 District Teacher of the Year! On behalf of the entire district, I thank all of last year's recipients as they are to be honored and commended for their exceptional work and service to our district.

## Technology Infrastructure Upgrade:

### Putting the pieces in place for meeting the demands of 21st Century Learning

During my 30 months as the Superintendent here at FRSD, the primary and consistent challenge has been balancing the budget. Two years ago our budget was cut by 8%, or \$4.5 million. If you were to lose that percentage from your home budget, your family would need to re-prioritize. That is exactly what

we needed to do in our district. Naturally, with such a huge cut in revenue and major changes in our budget, discussions with other educators and researching state and national trends needed to take place.

While I wrestled with some very tough decisions, I went back to the document that set the course for the district

through 2015; our Strategic Plan. By reviewing all of the action steps in the seven major areas, I sought to bring balance to our budget and my decision-making. I needed to look ahead three or four years to make sure I wasn't obligating future Boards of Education and future

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## New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum

### An update on the state monitoring and evaluation system for schools

The NJQSAC monitoring and evaluation system for public school districts establishes a comprehensive single accountability system. Under NJQSAC, public school districts are evaluated in five key areas of school district effectiveness – instruction and program, fiscal management, governance, personnel, and operations – to determine the extent to which the district provides a thorough and efficient education.

During the month of December a team, consisting of teachers, support staff, board members and administrators, met on several

occasions to complete the self-evaluated Statement of Assurance and the District Performance Review. These two documents were approved by the Board of Education and submitted to the NJ Department of Education for review and evaluation.

# NJQSAC

Mr. Jeff Scott, Interim Hunterdon County Superintendent, will be conducting an on-site visit in March as part of the evaluation process. A formal presentation will be shared at a public meeting of the Board of Education after the district receives a final score.



*Congratulations to Team 7-2 at J.P. Case Middle School! The students collected over 1,400 items for the Flemington Area Food Pantry during a five-day can drive. The students participated in this effort as part of a service project in learning about community engagement and ways to help make a difference. Well done, Team 7-2 students and teachers, including Dawn Hlavsa-Suk, Catherine Clark, Jackie Schorr, David Plichta and Diane Mondoro!*



Congratulations,

**Jill  
Goldman!**

Ms. Goldman, a health and physical education teacher at Francis A. Desmares School, has been selected by the AAHPERD Recognition Awards Committee to receive the Mabel Lee Award at the 2012 National Convention. The award will be presented on Thursday, March 15, in Boston.

The Mabel Lee Award provides the means through which the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance recognizes its younger members. Recipients have demonstrated outstanding potential in scholarship, teaching, or professional leadership.

Ms. Goldman has been a member of the AAHPERD since 2002 and served in various roles since 2007. She is in her sixth year teaching in our district. Congratulations, Ms. Goldman!

## Technology Update... (continued from Page 1)

Superintendents.

Specifically in the area of technology, the district needed to continue to move forward. Our students, their parents/guardians and our staff expected the resources to be available if we were going to continue to be a world-class school system.

Last spring, the Board approved a \$500,000 resolution that allowed the district to upgrade the technology infrastructure so that we would better serve our staff and students, both today and tomorrow. The plan addressed 11 Strategic Plan action steps and 10 action steps from our Technology Plan.

First, we installed six Cisco Integrated Service Routers (ISR) to create a more secure, manageable network. Second, the company that was selected through a state contract installed 137 Cisco wireless access points and wireless controllers in five schools, excluding J.P. Case. Copper Hill specifically needed new structured cabling the other four schools received but also had new patch panels installed.

The benefits of the new routers and firewall

will allow us to move forward by:

- Giving us "industry standard" hardware.
- Increasing our cyber security.
- Better managing our network.
- Increasing our capability to expand as needs grow.
- Supporting a future VoIP solution.

The wireless access project also greatly enhances, supports and benefits the district by:

- Providing superior wireless coverage capable of supporting a large quantity of wireless devices simultaneously.
- Preparing the district for state-mandated, online testing, anticipated in 2014-2015.
- Allowing for greater control of bandwidth and making problem-solving easier.
- Increasing efficiency of technology staff when trouble-shooting problems.

This project was partially funded from the 2010-2011 budget and the 2011-2012 budget. I made the decision to use some of the monies from Curriculum and Professional Development, and reallocate monies from other projects in the  
*(continued on Page 4...)*

## Board of Education appoints Anna Fallon

At the January 23 meeting, the Board of Education appointed Anna Fallon to fill a vacant seat. Ms. Fallon will serve on the Board until the next election.

A resident of Raritan Township, Ms. Fallon is a parent in the district. She recently served on the Education Foundation Research Committee and has been actively involved in our PTOs.

Ms. Fallon was selected after the Board conducted interviews in public session. Two other candidates also were considered.

Welcome, Anna!

## Taxpayer's Guide to Education Spending

I would like to share with our community critical financial information about our great school district that compares our spending to other districts in the county. All the information used to compile the charts below can be found on the NJ Department of Education web site.

If after reviewing the data below you have additional questions, please visit our web site at

[www.frsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.frsd.k12.nj.us) to view the complete report and descriptions of each "indicator" to better understand what factors were included in the costs/tabulations.

Finally, I want to clearly state that the information included is void of opinion and value but, rather, it is a factual statement to reflect spending data of our district.

Hunterdon County Summary -- 2011		
Total Per Pupil Cost	FRSD ranked	27 out of 28
Classroom Instruction	FRSD ranked	27 out of 28
Support Services	FRSD ranked	27 out of 28
Administrative Costs	FRSD ranked	23 out of 28
Maintenance & Operations	FRSD ranked	8 out of 28
Legal Services	FRSD ranked	19 out of 28

1 - Highest Spending School District

28 - Lowest Spending School District

Hunterdon County Districts K-8 , 751+ Enrollment	
District - Enrollment, # of Schools	
L	Lebanon Twp
T	Tewksbury Twp
C	Clinton Township
R	Readington
F	Flemington-Raritan

FRSD History of Spending					
1 - Highest Spending, 5 - Lowest Spending					
Category	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11
Per Pupil	3	4	4	5	5
Class Inst	3	4	3	4	4
Adm. Cost	3	5	4	5	5

## Ready for Kindergarten?

Registration for kindergarten students and 1st-graders new to the district will be held on Thursday, March 1. Times are 9-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-3 p.m. at the school the child will attend. Online packets, details and information can be found on our district web site. The snow date is March 8.

## School Board Elections move to November!

At the February 6 meeting, the Board of Education passed a resolution to move the School Board Elections to November. That means for the next four years, school board candidates will be elected on the November election day, not in April.

In addition, if the Board crafts a budget that remains at or under the state cap, a public vote on the budget is not required.



## Celebrating our Students, Staff & Schools

Musashi Eto, a 3rd-grade student at Robert Hunter School founded the Flemington-Iwate Friendship Network with the help of his 2nd-grade teacher Elizabeth Rainey. Musashi has worked hard to motivate and encourage fellow students to write letters to children in Japan who were impacted by an earthquake and tsunami.

The letter campaign shows a deep connection among the children, respect for each other and an awareness of the world around us. Musashi has inspired others across our district to take part in his cause. Hundreds of letters have been exchanged in the past year, touching the lives of countless students and families here at home and in Japan. I applaud and thank Musashi and Ms. Rainey for their efforts.

Social studies teachers from J.P. Case Middle School offered students the chance to participate in the National History Bee, a competition about history facts culminating in a national

tournament sponsored by the History Channel and with a \$50,000 scholarship grand prize. Before winter break, J.P. Case identified two school champions who will compete on behalf of the school in the regional tournament. The champions were 8th-grade student Katherine Stiefel and 7th-grade student Tommy Gonzalez.

Congratulations to our J.P. Case winners! For more information, visit: <http://ms.historybee.com>.



At Copper Hill School, students in 4th-grade teacher Suzanne Petto's class earned over \$160 completing chores for friends and family. The students donated the money to the *Courier News*' Wish Book project. The annual service project highlights the stories of local people who are in need and have made a wish for something special.

Over a dozen wishes were granted this year with the help of Ms. Petto's students and over 100 other Central Jersey residents who have given \$13,000 toward the effort. This year's wishes include computer games, beds for toddlers and a computer lab upgrade at a local center.

Since its inception 23 years ago, the program has raised over \$400,000 and has granted over 400 wishes. Congratulations, Ms. Petto and to the students in her class!

*Left: On January 23, the Board of Education recognized Robert Hunter student Musashi Eto, teacher Elizabeth Rainey and Principal Dr. Becky Hutto for their work in establishing the Flemington-Iwate Friendship Network.*

## *Flemington Free Public Library: History & Happenings*

### Stop by and visit this historic gem located in the heart of Flemington

One of my responsibilities as Superintendent of FRSD is to serve on the Board of the Flemington Free Public Library. First, if you have not yet visited the historic building, please take some time to stop in and tour this local treasure. Under the direction and leadership of Shawn Armington, the library houses many wonderful books and historic artifacts in a quiet setting.

The history of the Flemington Free Public Library can be traced back to 1799 when the New Jersey legislature passed an act calling for the incorporation of "library companies." Among several hundred of these newly established companies was the Flemington Library Company.

Around 1834, the Flemington Library Company was dissolved as books were circulated through Sunday School and private libraries. In 1901, the Flemington Library Association was founded and Mr. Hiram Deats served as President. The primary source of support came from the Flemington Women's Club, the Hunterdon County Historical Society and store-owner Mr. Elias Vossellar.

The library was built over a century ago. Thanks to Dr. William Bartles, who donated \$10,000 for the building, and Mr. Deats, who offered a corner lot for the site, the library was dedicated in 1911. Additional wings were built in 1938 and 1968. The latter addition was made

possible by a generous donation by Mrs. Sutphin in memory of her husband, Nedwill Sutphin, who served as a treasurer of the library's Board of Trustees.

Today, the Board of Trustees meets monthly. Since my arrival to the district, I have been impressed by the trustee members who volunteer their time, talents and generous financial support to the library.

It has been a great pleasure serving on the library Board along with President Anne Thomas, Jane DeHaven, Elizabeth Fisher, James Rossetti, Warren Buckleitner, Steve Rogow and Sandy Borucki.

The library offers several children's programs. Story Time for children ages 3-5 is held every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. Also, the Toddler Tales program, for children ages 2 and 3, is held every Wednesday, also at 10:30 a.m. The library also runs a Summer Reading Club for children ages two and up. Local merchants donate prizes that are awarded during the seven-week program.

Flemington is fortunate to have a beautiful and historic library in the center of town. I am honored to be a part of its history.

*Information in this article was excerpted from the library web site: <http://flemingtonpubliclibrary.org>.*

## *Read Across America Day* *Friday, March 2*

On March 2, students and staff throughout our schools will take part in events and activities that celebrate Read Across America Day.

Held in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, Read Across America Day promotes the joy of reading in schools across our nation.

In our district, our schools welcome special guest readers, students take part in lunch-time games and trivia and classes honor a time when everyone reads simultaneously.

The annual event is sponsored by the National Education Association and supported here by the Flemington-Raritan Education Association.

I commend the FREA for their spirit, dedication and enthusiasm in making Read Across America Day a success for all. I look forward to visiting students during the day and celebrating this special reading event here at FRSD.



## *Technology Update...* (continued from Page 2)

technology budget and several grants. The project was completed over the summer months with little or no interruption to instruction.

I want to acknowledge and thank Daniel Bland, Assistant Superintendent, who served as the point person for this huge undertaking. I also recognize and thank the members of our

Technology Department: Todd Fuhrman, Chris Hagan, Kevin Sochacki and Dino Taburas for their hard work and dedication to the success of this upgrade. I also recognize and thank our district's former Supervisor of Technology, Michelle Cheasty, as she was instrumental in the completion of this major upgrade.

## *School Counselors: Helping Students Be Brilliant*

From February 6-10, our district marked National School Counseling Week, which is sponsored by the American School Counselor Association. The ASCA's theme, "School Counselors: Helping Students Be Brilliant," draws our attention to the valuable work of our district's school counselors.

Each day, our counselors provide guidance, nurturing support and specialized services to students to help meet their individual needs. School counselors make a difference in the lives of each child they serve, helping students

achieve in all that they do. I commend and thank our district's school counselors for their hard work, dedication and efforts. They are:

- Heather Albanese—Reading-Fleming
- Colette Bails—J.P. Case Middle
- Sarah Fontanez — Robert Hunter
- Ellen Goodfellow — Copper Hill
- Lindsay John— Reading-Fleming
- Michael McCarthy—Reading-Fleming
- Megan O'Brien—J.P. Case Middle
- Cindy Povall — Barley Sheaf
- Mary Veltri—Francis A. Desmares

## *Star Lab*

On January 30, 3rd-graders at Robert Hunter School participated in a STARLAB. Teacher Pamela Kelliher presented lessons on moon phases and constellations in the portable planetarium.

We especially thank Robert Hunter parent Chris Boyce for obtaining free use of the STARLAB through Merck and Raritan Valley Community College.

I visited the Star Lab and saw first-hand how much the students enjoyed their experience! Well done!



## Celebrating our Students, Staff & Schools (continued from Page 3)

At RFIS, students on Team 5C kicked off their 6th Annual Book Drive. The students are collecting new and used books for Bridge of Books. The local entity distributes donated books to underprivileged children around the state.

The students are hanging posters in the school, giving speeches in homeroom classes, and distributing flyers to family and friends to raise awareness. Students will organize the books at a team meeting on April 5th. The donation will be delivered to the organization so that students across New Jersey can enjoy them.

Good luck, Team 5C, including teachers Allison Beder, Megan Buchala, Pam Errickson, Cindy Falowski, Babette Galinak, Jessica Laynor, and Robin Smith.

The J.P. Case Middle School varsity cheerleading squad clinched 1st-place at the North Hunterdon Middle School Winter

Classic on February 3. The team was victorious over Immaculate Conception, Clinton Public, and Readington schools. Congratulations go to cheerleaders Liz Duplay, Leah Creter, Hannah Davis, Jackie Webb, Isabelle Parcel, Nicole Bancroft, Kari Jensen, Tori Rozansky, Katherine Mensching, Jordan Dowling, Emily Kraus and Amanda Krantz as well as their coach, J.P. Case teacher Christine Casterline. Well done! Students at Francis A. Desmares School raised over \$6,700 for the American Cancer Society in the school's 5th annual Jump Rope for Heart campaign. Great job! Good luck to the J.P. Case varsity boys basketball team and their head coach, J.P. Case teacher David Hallinan! The team will take on Basking Ridge in the CJJBL Finals on February 14.

Mark your calendar! Barley Sheaf School will host its 4th Annual 5K, dubbed the Spring Sprint, on April 29. To register, visit the school web page for a form.

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”

Seneca  
Roman Philosopher

## Music to our ears...

Congratulations to J.P. Case students Lia Chen, Katie Lee, Victoria Qian, Jonathan Lin, and Jesse Chen for successfully auditioning for the Central Jersey Region Orchestra and Concert Band.

Recently, these students competed against 700 other students. High honors went to Vikki Qian, who was selected as the second overall chair on violin, and was accepted to the group for the third consecutive year. The students will perform in a special concert on March 4 in Monroe Township.

Vikki Qian, Katie Lee, and Jonathan Lin qualified to audition for the NJ All State Orchestra next month. We are also proud of Olivia Spildooren and Felix Ke, who represented J.P. Case at the audition.

Congratulations to these students for their achievement!



## Students to serve local seniors at annual Soup, Sandwich and a Show event, March 1

On March 1, students from J.P. Case Middle School and Reading-Fleming Intermediate School will team up and open our district's doors to over 200 local senior citizens for the annual *Soup, Sandwich and a Show* event!

Members of both schools' Student Council will serve a free lunch to our guests. The meal is prepared by Maschio's, our district's food service vendor. The lunch will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will be served to seniors who have a ticket.

Following lunch, our students will escort our special guests to the theater to enjoy a live performance of this year's musical, *Disney's Mulan, Jr.* The show will begin at 4:30 p.m.

I attended last year's luncheon and had the pleasure of speaking with some of our guests. The seniors were gracious, appreciative and complimentary. Not only did they enjoy their meal and the spectacular show, they were impressed by our talented students, our caring staff, and the school facility.

I encourage our community to attend this year's musical. Public performances will be held on March 2 at 7 p.m. and March 3 at 2 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at J.P. Case Middle School. Tickets sell fast!

Visit our web site for more information: [www.frsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.frsd.k12.nj.us).



Left: Last year, local senior citizens visited J.P. Case Middle School to take part in the annual *Soup, Sandwich and a Show* event.

After enjoying the free luncheon, our special guests viewed a live performance of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast, Jr.* The event is a huge success each year for our district and our community.

Well done!

