

# Newsletter

## *South Plainfield School District*

### SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

NOREEN LISHAK EdD

**The South Plainfield School District is in the process of developing our Strategic Plan....** The strategic plan is a document used to guide the direction of the district over the next three years. A committee of forty students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members met for our first meeting in late October to begin the planning process. Over the next number of meetings, the committee will review goals and objectives in the following areas: Academics and Technology, Professional Development, Community and Public Relations, and Fiscal and Physical Operations. The committee began the process of writing objectives for each of goal. Once completed the school community will have the opportunity to participate in a survey designed to gain feedback on the areas the school community feels is a priority in moving our district forward.

A community survey will be sent home in late November with the results reflected in the Strategic Plan that will be presented to the Board of Education in January of 2020. We are hoping the school community takes the time to read and respond to the survey as this document will be used as the pathway to guide the district moving forward.

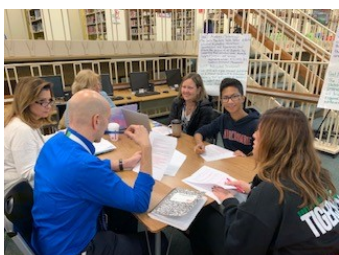
**Our district is also happy to announce an initiative entitled – Community Connection.** This partnership with the Borough of South Plainfield will allow our broadcast students to produce a monthly segment to air on cable television as well as the district website highlighting the many happenings within the district in partnership with the borough. The segments will focus on interviews with borough officials and district administration to discuss topics that affect our schools and the borough including safety, shared services, and community projects. Community Connection will allow the South Plainfield residents the opportunity to better understand the importance of a strong partnership between the schools and the borough, as well as gain information on how the district and borough work together to ensure our schools are secure and the community is informed on the happenings within the town. Together we can build a stronger community for our South Plainfield families.

August 2019  
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## CURRICULUM CORNER

### Book Look at the High School Information Center

On Friday, October 4, Mr. Jackson's English classes visited the High School Information Center for a Book Look. Students were given the opportunity to rotate through six tables covered



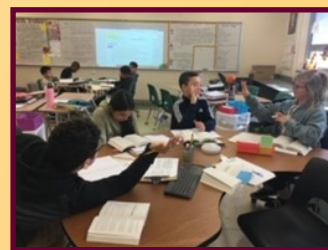
in books from all different genres and subjects. Mrs. Parisi instructed them on how to preview books by looking at the cover, reading the inside and outside of the book jacket and perusing through the first several pages. They then wrote down their favorites as they moved through each table. At the conclusion of the Book Look, the students checked out several books that interested them, and they will now have the marking period to read their chosen books. It was clear that they were excited to see the many book options available to them, and it proved to be a truly rewarding experience for all involved!

### ELA...Book Clubs in Our Schools help Students Grow

**Grant School teachers have found great academic success facilitating Book Clubs....**

**Why are book clubs important?** As an instructional context, book clubs, deepen readers' appreciation and understanding of a common text. They provide opportunity to extend students' thinking as they process and interpret the perspectives and opinions of their peers. When students participate in books clubs, they allow students to expand their ability to express their ideas orally using academic language as well as providing an authentic context for applying norms for listening and speaking.

During book clubs, students meet in small, heterogeneous groups to discuss a book that they have all have chosen to read. Through sharing their thinking, they build a richer understanding than any one student could gain from independent reading alone.

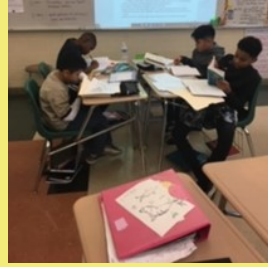


Mrs. Wiczorek's Grade 6 Class



## CURRICULUM CORNER CONTINUE.....

**What do book clubs look like?** Book clubs bring a small group of students together to talk about a book each has chose (from a limited selection). Students may sit in a circle of chairs or on the rug, but without a table between them. There are no barriers to communications. Teachers facilitate the group to support development of effective discussion skills, to lift the level of discussion, and to promote a deep understanding of the writer's and illustrator's craft.



Mrs. Wiczorek's Grade 6 Class

## MATH HAPPENINGS

Bedtime Math – Teachers received professional development on November 5th to provide lively math lessons to students K through 5. This program was developed in conjunction with Columbia Teachers College to provide research-proven processes that give students hands-on learning opportunities. The program will allow students to engage in productive struggle while experiencing the thrill of victory. Students will be using the games during Math Centers in the classroom.

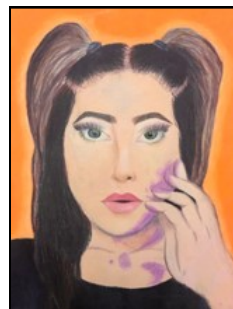


# NEWS & NOTES

**ART CORNER....**We are just two months into our first year offering AP Studio Art at South Plainfield High School and we could not be more pleased with the work our talented students are producing. Students are working diligently on their pieces that they will include in their portfolios to be submitted to the College Board. Students in this AP Studio Art course have been offered the opportunity to continue their art education with the opportunity to receive college credit. AP Studio Art students create a portfolio of work to demonstrate the artistic skills and ideas they have developed, refined, and applied over the course of the year to produce visual compositions. Their portfolio will consist of a “Sustained Investigation” of 15 uploaded digital images of their work and commentary in addition to a “Selected Works” portfolio of 5 physical artworks sent into College Board. The AP requirement is to submit a portfolio of 20 works which, like all other AP courses, is scored on a 5-point scale. All portfolios are assessed by at least four highly experienced studio art educators (AP Art and Design teachers or higher education faculty). We are confident in our students talent and commitment to this course and can’t wait to see the results, many of which will be on display at our Annual District Art Show in May 2020!

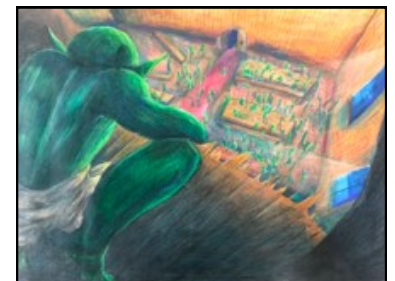


Artist Krystal Acosta



Artist Genesis

Artist Aura Akunne



# Kennedy Elementary School...Kevin Hajduk



This school year has moved quickly so far. The Kennedy School students, faculty, and parents have seen tremendous progress in many areas of our school. For the second year in a row, the Kennedy School students arrived back to school after the summer months as the champions of the summer reading program at the South Plainfield Library. This program encouraged all students in the South Plainfield School District to read throughout the summer. Our school community is very proud of our students for taking on this challenge and finishing on top! The students of Kennedy School read over 2,327 books this past summer!

The students and staff at Kennedy School continued to "Never Forget" the events of September 11, 2001 as they took part in a 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony on September 11, 2019 in the front of our school. The students learned about being a hero to someone each day, as well as, the many sacrifices that adults make so that the students can grow, learn, and participate in various activities each day. Also in September, the staff of Kennedy School was busy assessing and analyzing the data for our students. This process will help our school continue to focus on finding ways to reach all learners and to continue to improve the achievement level of every student who attends Kennedy School.

The JFK staff introduced the students to a new Character Education Program at the start of the school year. School Resource Officer Zach brought a "tiger" to our school on October 18th and we made a promise to help this "tiger" become a better community member. The "tiger" will be part of our Character Education Program this year and we are excited to show it all the good character traits we are learning every day at JFK. We plan to name the tiger, give it an identity, and author a story throughout this school year.

As the 2019-2020 continues, the Kennedy School PTO has planned many great opportunities for our students to take part in. We look forward to working with the community in the "Clean Communities Program" and the many schoolwide trips, parties, and assemblies that will make this school year one of the best ever!



# Roosevelt Elementary School.... Dr. Robert Goman

Fall fun and smiles were abundant in the Roosevelt administration building on Wednesday October 16th. Students from Roosevelt and Franklin School came together to enjoy seasonal activities, games, crafts, and STEAM activities. A highlight was choosing and decorating a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch. Students also enjoyed an interactive read aloud of Pat Hutchins, Rosie's Walk.

Our students at Roosevelt Elementary School have been busy this fall, "Goblin Up Our Facts," writing letters to "Farmer Frank" and learning about Day of the Dead in Spanish class. We are looking forward to a great winter season, building on our student's knowledge to provide an equitable education for all learners.





## Franklin Elementary School... Mr. Errico



**Franklin School** is off to a great start! Our wonderful PTO sponsored two kick-off events that ensures our school is on the road to success. We opened our year with our annual Anti-Bullying Assembly followed by Franklin's Welcome Back Night for all our students, families and stakeholders. The PTO provided lots of goodies and activities including, a bouncy house, snacks, games, and my favorite, freshly made pizza.

This year, one of our school focuses will be on Character Education. On September 27th Franklin kicked off our program with our annual Character Education Assembly. Mrs. Moritz and Ms. Wolfskeil were key teachers in providing opportunities for our students to learn and review the 5 Pillars of Character Education; these very important lessons will be reinforced by recognizing one student each month who exhibits these traits.



**We would like to give a shout out to a few of our Franklin favorite activities, events and heroes...**

- Great job Mr. Parisi and the 3rd and 4th Grade Chorus .
- Thank you, Franklin PTO, for contributing to our student's read habits... Our Book Fair was awesome!
- A big shout out to our own South Plainfield Fire Department, as they presented for Fire Prevention and Safety Week. Thank You SPFD!!!
- Red Ribbon Week, Week of Respect, and Violence and Drug Free Weeks was recognized through many activities that showed support of Respect!
- Franklin students honored our brave men and women during our Veteran's Day Assembly!

**We look forward to the Holiday's and wish all a Happy Thanksgiving!**

## Riley Elementary School....Mrs. Rosaura Valarezo

### Promoting Character Education at Riley Elementary School!

In order to promote a positive school climate and culture in our school, we are placing emphasis on the importance of developing and acquiring traits of character education. We know that when students acquire these positive traits at an early age, it will assist them in becoming moral, civic, good, mannered human beings. With this in mind, we have begun to implement Student of the Month in which we recognize one student per grade, each month who exhibits one of the following character education traits: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The student is selected by their teacher and at the end of the month we hold an assembly where we call one student from each class and they receive a certificate for Student of the Month, and a Valarezo Voucher worth \$5.00. They can use the \$5.00 Valarezo Voucher to purchase items at our PTSO store. In addition, we take the student's picture and display it in a prominent area in the hallway of the school.



## Staying Healthy in School (*Help!!!! Why is My Child Ill So Often?!*)

Do you feel as if your child is frequently sick? Why is infectious illness so common in school age children, and what can you do to help your child stay healthy?

### How do infections spread?

Many childhood illnesses are caused by viruses which enter the body through the mucous membranes of the nose and/or mouth. One cough or sneeze can spread over 3,000 germs into the air. All it takes is a single child to bring a virus to school for a cold virus to begin spreading. Small children have developing immune systems and are often not proficient with healthy habits that prevent the spread of germs.

### Why is illness more common in the winter months?

There are many theories as to why it seems we are ill more in the colder months however, it is not true that illness is caused by being cold and/or wet. It is true though that those conditions do affect how our immune systems cope with infections. We spend more time indoors and in close proximity to others as people return to school, work and day care in the fall and less time in the sun which lowers our bodies vitamin D levels. Viruses find these conditions ideal to hop from one host to another. In addition, many viruses flourish in the dry, cold winter air.

### Why hand washing counts and other ways to help stay healthy.

What is the one culprit that makes us sick? GERMS! (Most commonly viruses and bacteria).

Knowing how these germs work is key to illness prevention. Teach your children how to properly wash their hands. This includes using soap and washing as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Teach children to keep their hands away from their face and out of their mouths. Illness is less likely to occur if we take these simple steps to keep germs from entering our bodies. Older children may need reminders to eat healthy and to get enough sleep. Poor diet and lack of enough sleep, along with the stressors many students face, lowers the bodies ability to fight off infection. If you do get sick, take time to rest and recover. Take time off from work or school to give your body time to heal and to avoid passing illness to others.

**Sherri Lapp, BSN, RN, CSN-NJ**  
Kennedy Elementary School Nurse



# Grant School..... Mr. Patrick Sarullo



**Grant School Super Heroes**

## Planning & Preparation

From all academic courses to Physical Education classes, the rigor and expectations at Grant School are very high. The 5th grade students have adjusted quickly. We commend the Grant School parents for not just focusing on the final grades of marking period one, but understanding that Grant School teachers are providing instruction that is in alignment with content standards and are differentiating to make sure all learners are being challenged every day. This requires a lot of planning on the part of our staff. All teachers at Grant

School excel in writing and reviewing clear objectives daily, that our students are expected to know and understand. When Vice Principal Mr. Redmon or I visit a classroom, we will ask students to close their eyes and tell us what they are learning. We are very impressed when the students can identify not only one, but all of the objectives of the day. Many Grant School teachers also use learning scales to help the students self-assess their own progress with each learning objective.

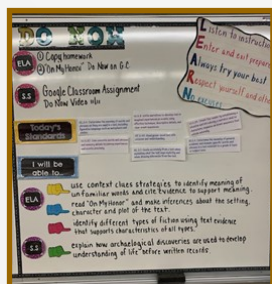
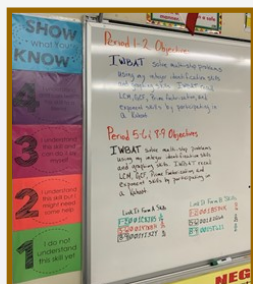
## Flexible Seating & Teaching Beyond the Text Books

Grant School is progressive, and you may see the classrooms changing. The standard seating of desks in rows has given way to learners working together in small groups daily. Our teachers certainly aren't working page to page from the textbook. Many teachers are creating "interactive notebooks" and "foldables" to assist students in recording and representing knowledge.

## Success

### Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on state testing:

5th Grade Math	5th Grade ELA	6th Grade Math	6th Grade ELA
2014-2015 44%	2014-2015 43%	2014-2015 37%	2014-2015 51%
2018-2019 54%	2018-2019 71%	2016-2017 54%	2018-2019 65%

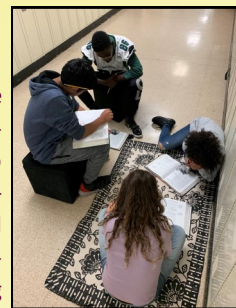


## South Plainfield Middle School.....Mr. Leo Whalen

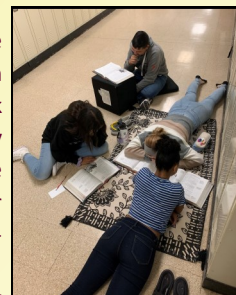


The Middle School is making a concentrated effort this year to promote students love for reading. Reading is essential to a well-lived life and is linked to overall academic success of our students. At the Middle School we are not just talking about why reading matters, we are living it. Our 7th and 8th grade ELA classes are implementing book clubs this year. Book Clubs introduce reading to students as an interactive, social experience. Book Clubs aim to deepen readers' appreciation and understanding of a common text. Students are able to process and interpret the perspectives and opinions of their peers when they work in their small groups. Students are challenged to express their ideas orally using academic language. The Association for Middle Level Education suggests that it is during the middle school years that students set their lifelong reading habits and preferences. Positive and fun experiences help students appreciate the act of reading. Book clubs will expose students to a variety of genres, helping them to discover personal preferences. To further enhance our efforts this year the Middle School has began an assisted learning program called Kids and the K9. Twice a month

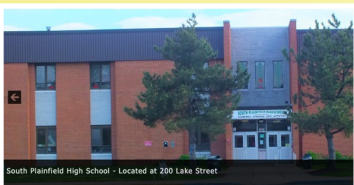
Murphy, a Therapy Dog, visits the Middle School. Under the supervision of a trained handler, Murphy meets with students to read or to interact with a group of students. The main objective of this program is to provide a relaxed and "dog-friendly" atmosphere, which allows students to practice the skill of reading. By sitting down next to a dog and reading to the dog, all threats of being judged are put aside. The students relax and focus on the reading. Reading improves because the students are practicing the skill of reading, building self-esteem, and associating reading with something pleasant.



Continuing with the theme of developing a love for reading our students visited the Information Center in October to participate in a "book tasting" event. The theme was Starbucks, a play on the famous coffee shop. Students were able to sample books from six different genres. After their visit, students participated in an online survey about their favorite genres. This will help Ms. Brandenburg, our Librarian, to enhance our school's book collection based on student interest.



## South Plainfield High School....Mr. Robert Diehl



South Plainfield High School - Located at 200 Lake Street

Great job done by all at our Fall Pep Rally held Friday November 1st recognizing all the fall sports athletes with performances by our Cheerleaders and Marching Band.

Our Student Council sponsored Homecoming Dance was held on Saturday, November 2nd at Snuffys' Pan-tagis in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Nearly 300 SPHS students attended this beautiful semi-formal Dinner Dance. The Highlight of the evening included the presentation of our Homecoming King and Queen. King- Bobby Rivera and Queen – Tiffany Pham.

HIGH SCHOOL Accolades.... The High School Greenhouse is nearly completed, and we are very excited! During the fall season, SPHS Marching Band placed 4th out of 22 bands at the Tournament of Bands Atlantic Coast Championship in Hershey, PA. Our Boys Soccer won the Blue Division, and our Fall Cheerleading team took 2nd in the Red Division Game Day Cheer.

Student Shout outs too...Sara Dabul, Jonathan Mohan, Emily Wong, and Jason Rodas were selected to participate in the TCNJ Honors Band.Sara Dabul, Jonathan Mohan, Emily Wong, Sara DeSimone, and Tommy O'Brien will be auditioning for the CJMEA Region band on December 14th. Julianne Ferraro will be competing in the Group 2 Girls Cross Country Championships this Saturday at Holmdel Park. Five students (Thommy Baez Santana, Sarai Adams, Lucy Flannery, Timson Nguyen, and James Buchanan) were nominated and got accepted to participate at TCNJ Honors Orchestra.





# NEWS & NOTES

## South Plainfield Athletics..... Kevin McCann

### TIGERS ATHLETICS MAKE NOISE DURING THE FALL SEASON

Season over and the winter season about to start, South Plainfield looks to continue their winning ways. Go Tigers!

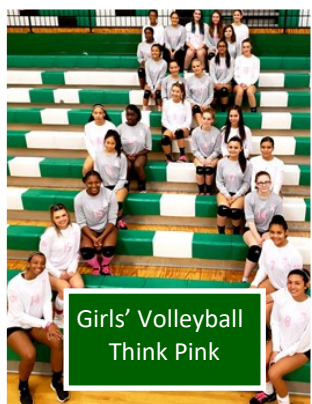


GMC Blue Division Champions  
Boys' Soccer

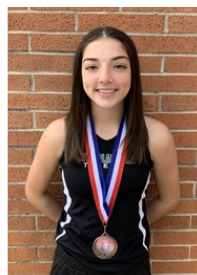


South Plainfield Athletics completed another successful fall sports season. Student-athletes from boys' soccer, girls' soccer, boys' cross country, girls' cross country, field hockey, gymnastics, girls' tennis, girls' volleyball, fall cheer,

and football were named to their All Division and All Conference teams. This was as a result of their hard work and individual achievements.



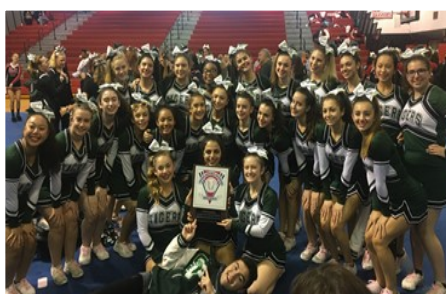
Girls' Volleyball  
Think Pink



Julianne Ferraro  
4x GMC Medalist

The boys' soccer team captured a Blue Division Championship. Our lady tigers' cheer team finished as a Greater Middlesex Conference Red Division Runner-up in Game Day Cheer. The girls' tennis team made it to the state tournament for the second consecutive year while many other teams also competed in the NJSIAA State Tournament. The football team ended their season with an impressive win over North Plainfield in the annual North vs. South game. Many teams participated in Breast Cancer Awareness month. The girls' volleyball team once again had a "Think Pink" match to raise money specifically for breast cancer research. The fundraiser was a huge success raising over \$900. On the individual side, girls' cross-country senior Julianne Ferraro won her fourth individual GMC medal.

With the fall season over and the winter season about to start, South Plainfield looks to continue their winning ways. Go Tigers!



Cheerleading 2nd GMC Red Division



## Guidance Department..... Mr. Fierra

Greetings from Guidance! With one marking period down and three left to go, it's safe to say that this school year is flying by. This Fall we had a lot going on in the department and district, with no signs of anything slowing down anytime soon! In the K-4s (our 4 Elementary schools) we have implemented the Wingman program now in each, and things are progressing nicely, as Ian Hockley, the program's founder has come to town twice this Fall to see the training through at both Riley and Roosevelt. Speaking of Roosevelt, Principal Robert Goman and Guidance Counselor Rowena Wu will be pioneering a new social-emotional concept called, "The Power of Pause-itevity". This program has been embraced by the phenomenal staff at Roosevelt, as professional development and training for them are set to begin soon. The Guidance Department has a new face to say hello to. Wellspring and South Plainfield have partnered to bring a full-time, on-site, mental health practitioner to our district! Lisa Lussier, who is housed in an office at the high school, began with us back in mid-October and has made an immediate impact for the betterment for our students.

Welcome Lisa! Finally, a word as we all head into the 2nd marking period of school: First marking period usually begins with all students vowing to make this year, "the best year ever!" and are motivated, healthy and positive as they sail through a mostly un-interrupted two months of school. This is not the case for Marking Period #2, as "uninterrupted" would never be a word to describe the time frame. Election Day, Teacher Convention, Thanksgiving, Winter Holidays, and Martin Luther King Day are all interruptions during this span that can create inconsistency to our daily school routines, not to mention when our favorite winter ailments rip their way through our homes causing us to miss even more time. My advice to you all is this: Stay focused, take each and every single day one day at a time, and finish TODAY whatever you can—trying to leave yourself free for tomorrow! If you put ANYTHING off until later, chances are that given all of the inconsistencies mentioned earlier, it will come back to rear its ugly head at the most inopportune times. Good luck Tigers!



### Upcoming District Events

**12/4/2019** FRK Winter Concert  
**12/10/2019** SPHS Winter Concert  
**12/11/2019** COW Meeting  
**12/16/2019** SPMS PTO Meeting  
**12/17 2019** ROOS Winter Concert  
**12/18/2019** BOE Meeting  
**12/18/2019** Early Dismissal All Schools  
**12/23/2019-1/1/2020** Schools Closed  
**1/13/2020** SPMS PTO Meeting  
**1/20/2020** MLK Schools Closed

**1/22/2020** ROOS PTO Meeting  
**1/27/2020** End of the Marking Period  
**1/31/2020** ROOS Multicultural Day  
**2/10/2020** SPMS PTO Meeting  
**2/11/2020** ROOS PTO Meeting  
**2/14/2020** 1/2 Day Students  
**2/17/2020** Schools Closed  
**2/20/2020** Grant School Conferences

