

TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

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SUPERINTENDENT SCHOOL COMMUNITY UPDATES May 8, 2018

District Mission: All students will graduate with a vision for their future, motivated to learn continually and prepared to succeed in their choice of college or career.

DISTRICT PRIORITIES

Based on the feedback from a wide range of community stakeholders, school site visits, and data review, the District priorities for 2017-18:

1. **INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**
 - a. School Improvement Framework (Connected Action Roadmap)
 - b. Effective Data Culture
2. **EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS**
 - a. Observations & Feedback
 - b. Leadership Development
3. **CULTURE**
 - a. Highly Reliable Schools That Support Learning
4. **CENTRAL OFFICE TRANSFORMATION**
 - a. Total Quality Management/ Customer Service
 - b. Tiered School Supports
 - c. Parent Empowerment

POINTS OF PRIDE

Trenton Schools Exit Priority/Focus Status: The NJ Department of Education notified the District that the following schools are eligible to exit Priority/Focus Status as of June 30, 2018. Multiple factors informed the decision-making process, including student achievement, and other school accountability measures, CSI/RAC Team feedback, and the sustainability of noted improvements. **This further demonstrates that our schools are making real progress.**

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| 1. Columbus ES (Exiting Priority Status) | 4. Washington ES (Existing Focus Status) |
| 2. Franklin ES (Exiting Focus Status) | 5. Hedgepeth-Williams MS (Exiting Priority Status) |
| 3. Grant ES (Existing Priority Status) | 6. Trenton Central HS – Main (Exiting Focus Status) |

PBSIS Leadership Forum: Dunn Middle School was selected to be showcased at the upcoming PBSIS Leadership Forum (Positive Behavior Support in Schools). The Dunn PBSIS team is comprised of over 20 staff members who have dedicated their time to ensure students feel supported and are encouraged to make better decisions. They have been working diligently to maintain the program because staff and students enjoy the incentives and rewards. PBSIS has worked wonders for their culture and climate, class period transitions, chronic absenteeism, and suspension rates. The Forum will be held at the Mercer County College Conference Center on May 31st. Congratulations to Principal Roman and the entire Dunn Team for **putting children first.**

Governor’s Teacher and Educational Services Professional Recognition Program: This program highlights educational innovation, student achievement, the rewards of teaching, and important services outside the classroom environment that lead to student success. Further, it seeks to attract public attention to the **positive aspects of our educational system**. The following (21) staff members will be recognized and celebrated on May 11th at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton.

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| 1. Johnson Chacko (Daylight/Twilight HS) | 12. Elizabeth Gomez (Wilson ES) |
| 2. Elena Gonzalez (Dunn MS) | 13. Renee Bailey (Jefferson ES) |
| 3. Jeneva Nelson (Franklin ES) | 14. Karen Minott (Mott ES) |
| 4. Shaeffona Robinson-Gentry (Franklin ES) | 15. Elba Rivera (Mott ES) |
| 5. Joyce Clark (Grant ES) | 16. Kelly Fullard (Martin Luther King ES) |
| 6. Lissette Davilla (Grant ES) | 17. Mia McCrae (Martin Luther King ES) |
| 7. Eileen Scarborough (Hedgepeth Williams MS) | 18. Marc Rubinstein (Rivera MS) |
| 8. Alan Wilkins (Hedgepeth Williams MS) | 19. Carol Tanner (Robbins ES) |
| 9. Monique Gamboa (PJ Hill ES) | 20. Debbie Yellen (Robbins ES) |
| 10. Norma Villanueva (PJ Hill ES) | 21. Linda Alexander (Washington ES) |
| 11. Irene Colon (Wilson ES) | |

Attendance Update: The District prioritized staff attendance this year and we are pleased to report that real progress is being made in our schools. Principals have worked with their staff to increase attendance and provide educational services to students with certified teachers. During the 2016-17 school year, there were 21,307 absences recorded. Due to this staffing challenge, our provider (Source 4 Teachers) also reported a substitute teacher fill rate of 59%. This means that **8,693 days of classroom instruction were lost last year**.

As of May 1st, we have increased staff attendance by 18.75% this year. This translates into **3,043 more days of classroom instruction** with a certified teacher. Our provider has also increased the substitute teacher fill rate by 5%. Special thanks to all staff that continue to put children first.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Preschool Update: The District currently provides over 2100 seats for pre-K. Despite having one of the best preschool programs in NJ, we believe that **improvement is a never-ending goal**. Our mission is to ensure that all Trenton families have access to FREE high quality pre-school. We held a Pre-K Fair last month and hundreds of families signed up, but we still have seats available. Please call our Pre-k hotline for more details 609-656-4900 ext. 5667.

Special Education Preschool (PSD): Our goal is to ensure that all Trenton families have access to high quality preschool. Special Education preschool classes will continue to be honored, as will all services and supports – including related services – based upon a child’s IEP. **The District is not eliminating preschool special education programming**. However, we are recommending a change in location of our programs to District community provider sites. The purpose of Special Education is to provide students services in the least restrictive environment.

This change in location will allow special education preschool students the ability to interact with higher functioning peers and benefit from higher-order learning, language, social, behavioral, and play models within their buildings. This also allows special education preschool students to not be excluded from opportunities to interact with higher functioning peers. **The goal of the program is to increase student access to higher-order instruction, peer interaction, and social growth opportunities**. We will continue to provide ALL instructional components (from certified teachers) as well as all related services as mandated by each child’s IEP. The following District Community Providers have confirmed their availability to receive students:

PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION (SELF-CONTAINED)			
SITE	ADDRESS	PSD SEATS	FEEDER
Mercer CYO	920 South Broad Street	24	Grant
Laura Spellman	540 North Olden Avenue	24	PJ Hill, Wilson
Kids R First Greenwood	415 Greenwood Avenue	24	East/South
Young Scholars	471 Parkway Avenue	12	West
Riverside Pediatric	325 Jersey Street	3 Classes	Medically Fragile

Preschool Disabled related services such as: Speech, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy will be provided by our current vendor Monmouth Ocean Educational Service Commission (MOESC).

Preschool Inclusion seats are also available for Trenton students at the following locations: (Slots are being held for placement based on student address verification) Final program approval will be forthcoming after the District Community Provider facility site visits are conducted by Mercer County Special Education staff.

PRESCHOOL INCLUSION			
SITE	ADDRESS	SEATS	WARD/AREA
Carolyn Stokes	1 Princess Diana Lane	3	North
Mercer CYO	920 South Broad Street	3	South
Kids R First Greenwood	415 Greenwood Avenue	4	East/South
Kids R First Greenwood	506-508 East State Street	4	East
Mill Hill	101-A Oakland Avenue	4	North/West
Stepping Stones	1015 Fairmont Avenue	6	East
CHS – Head Start Smith/ Santiago	1198 Southard Street	12	North
CHS – Head Start East	794 East State Street	12	East
Young Scholars	471 Parkway Avenue	3	West

Reading Intervention Program: Last year, 2 out of 10 Trenton students were proficient in Reading. Schools have been working this year to provide additional support to students in need of improvement. The data below is based on the 5,754 elementary students in the district. Last year, 15% of students were working on or above grade level materials. **This year 41% (2,369 students) are now working on grade level material and 21% (1,222 students) are now working on above grade level material.** Congratulations to the following schools for achieving the highest increase of students working on or above grade level materials: Washington 49%, Robbins 38%, MLK 38%, and Gregory 38%. **This is real and unprecedented progress.**

READING PROGRAM UPDATE: Data as of April 26, 2018			
	Working Below Grade Level Material	Working On Grade Level Material	Working Above Grade Level Material
District Overall	From 76% to 38%	From 20% to 41%	From 4% to 21%
Columbus	From 78% to 45%	From 19% to 36%	From 3% to 18%
Franklin	From 71% to 31%	From 24% to 44%	From 5% to 25%
Grant	From 76% to 41%	From 22% to 39%	From 2% to 20%
Gregory	From 81% to 44%	From 16% to 39%	From 3% to 17%
Jefferson	From 77% to 40%	From 19% to 41%	From 4% to 19%
Martin L. King	From 89% to 51%	From 10% to 37%	From 1% to 12%
Mott	From 66% to 27%	From 28% to 44%	From 6% to 29%
PJ Hill	From 73% to 38%	From 23% to 42%	From 4% to 21%
Parker	From 70% to 25%	From 23% to 45%	From 6% to 30%
Robbins	From 79% to 40%	From 17% to 44%	From 5% to 16%
Washington	From 69% to 20%	From 28% to 53%	From 3% to 27%
Wilson	From 74% to 35%	From 20% to 37%	From 5% to 27%

Extended School Year Update (ESY): Extended School Year is a program mandated by the State of New Jersey’s special education code. We want to clarify that ALL students who are eligible for the ESY program will receive ESY services. The foundational requirement for ESY is to prevent the regression of skills over the break between the end of the school year and the beginning of the next school year. It provides instructional and related services, as mandated by a student’s IEP (Parents are an invited participant). The IEP Team considers all relevant data, including academics, social-emotional, IEP goal attainment, and results from breaks in programming (such as winter and spring breaks). It is possible that some students may require ESY one year and not the next, but this is based upon data reviewed by the IEP Team. **The District is committed to providing ESY services for all students who qualify for ESY services.**

Therapeutic Transitional Program Update: The District is opening an in-district Therapeutic Transitional Program option (TTP). This program will serve classified students with behavior/emotional impairment and general education students with behavioral/emotional challenges. **Our continued goal is to significantly reduce the number of students in out-of-district placement.** Child Study Teams are reviewing/revising 1:1 and Paraprofessional assignments, including long-term needs. The District has also met with Out-of-District school directors to discuss program offerings and the process by which to transition students back to District schools.

Meetings with State and County Special Education departments have also been positive as there is a strong justification for the development of this new program. District staff will be used to support the TTP program in the City of Trenton. We have maintained communications with both the County and State Offices to ensure that all staffing, programming, and related facilities and resources meet their requirements for final program approval. The program will open September 2018 at 915 Parkside Ave.

Daylight/Twilight Update: The School Support Office is working collaboratively with Daylight Twilight leadership team to improve alternative high school programming for the 2018-19 school year. In preparation for its return to the Hanover Street Building in 2019, we believe that additional investments in resources, professional development, and ongoing support are needed to improve student outcomes at the current Cadwalader Campus.

We also believe that in order for transformation to take place, new strategies, instructional approaches, and progress monitoring are required. Enhancements to Daylight programs will be used to support the following student groups in fulfilling their high school graduation requirements: Life Skills, Overage and Under Credited (Ages: 16-21), Newcomers (Limited English Proficiency), Students with Interruptions in Formal Education, and Adjudicated Youth.

With regards to the Twilight Program (Ages 22 & Over), the State of New Jersey does not provide funding for adult education, and therefore no new Twilight students will be allowed to enroll in the program until an external funding source has been identified. However, the District will take the next 2 years to honor the commitment of current Twilight students so they can complete the program and earn their high school diploma.

Strategic Planning Update: Strategic planning is currently moving forward. The District is actively recording all the data collected from students, staff, and parents into an easy to read format. Listening Tours have been progressing and we've received community feedback on a wide range of topics. Overall, school community members have expressed their appreciation that the District is making an effort to hear directly from key stakeholders. Community members have also expressed the need to increase the frequency of forums in the future.

Listening Tour Participant Summary (to date)

Number of School Communities: **16**
Number of Community Participants: **750**

Listening Tour Feedback Summary (to date)

- Parent University Needs (resources and support with learning English/Spanish, computers, helping children with their homework, parent advocacy and peer mentoring support)
- Need to increase and improve transportation
- Need for increase in Special Education support
- Enhance methods of communication (need better website/cell phone app)
- Conduct necessary improvements to facilities
- Latino families stated a need for more Spanish speaking staff working in schools
- Improvement in Customer service at Central Office

High School engagement will require a different focus because of the changes associated with the new high school building. Multiple community organizations have expressed an interest in hosting the meetings. We will be working closely with Principals to identify the right venue and date for their school communities.

Bilingual Program Update: The Bilingual Department is currently working collaboratively with an External Evaluator to perform a needs assessment based on focus groups, staff interviews, data review, and school site visits. The deliverables will be a formal report with program and staffing recommendations for District level investment. Details will be forthcoming at the conclusion of the findings.

Career & Technical Education Support Update: The District is currently working with Career & Technical Education Specialist. The consultant is working closely with the high school teams to support effective CTE in Trenton. They will be performing school visits and reviewing the following programs to make recommendations for improvement:

- STEM Academy
- Restaurant & Business Academy
- Health Sciences Academy
- Communications Academy
- Visual & Performing Arts Academy

Career Academy Support Update: The District is currently working with a Career Academy implementation partner to support the development of model career academies at TCHS. They are working closely with the school team to discuss a schedule for assessing, planning, and aligning existing TCHS small learning communities to career academies that meet the National Standards of Practice to ensure students are prepared to succeed in their choice of college or career.

Budget Approved: The Governor's FY 2019 budget proposal included an **\$11,471,975** increase for the students of Trenton. Significant increases were allocated in Transportation, Security, and Special Education Aid. The accounting office finalized all schedules and supporting documentation for approval by the Board and submission to the County Office on March 20th.

The 2018/2019 Budget in the amount of **\$331,138,448** was approved by the County Business Office on March 21, 2018. The County Executive Superintendent approved the budget on March 29, 2018. As per N.J.S.A. 18A:22-11, the budget was advertised in the Times of Trenton on April 7, 2018, four days prior to the public hearing. The budget was uploaded to the district website on April 9, 2018.

Our guiding principles for the 2018-19 school year are as follows:

- Ensure every possible dollar is invested in meeting student needs
- Empower staff members to grow through targeted professional development
- Thoughtful realignment and reallocation of resources
- Identify operational efficiencies and reduce administrative costs
- Ensure spending is aligned to District academic priorities
- Demonstrate our commitment to facility improvements

Budget Highlights include investments in the following areas:

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

- Increase achievement for all students in literacy and mathematics
- Improve the effectiveness of academic interventions for student groups
- New Math adoption K-12
- New World Language adoption K-5
- New Language Arts adoption 9-12
- Fund the position of Supervisor of College & Career Readiness
- Expand career connected opportunities for all students

GIFTED & TALENTED

- Increase advanced opportunities for students in grades K-8
- Expand Advanced Placement offerings in grades 9-12
- Provide opportunities for students to take college courses

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Bring more special education students back to District schools, making students part of an inclusive learning environment that is least restrictive
- Implement a Therapeutic Transitional Program to provide a temporary therapeutic environment for students who have not been successful in a traditional educational setting
- Fund the position of Paraprofessional in Special Education self-contained classrooms

BILINGUAL /ESL

- Expansion and continued funding for Bilingual Centers and ESL Programs
- Restructuring of the Newcomers Program which will serve students who have interruptions in formal education
- Fund an additional position of Supervisor of Bilingual/ESL to assist in the coordination of programming

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Focus on best practices to increase student learning and growth in literacy and mathematics
- Offer extensive training in Cultural Competency, Sheltered English Instruction, and Restorative Practices
- Fortify Career and Technical Pathways through Project Based Learning

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

- Continue to fund technology support for every school
- Increase student access to computers, hand-held devices, and software for every school
- Funding for significant advances in the technology infrastructure
- Provide support and training on the use of technology tools in the instructional process

COUNSELING SERVICES

- Adopt the National Model for Counseling /American School Counselor Association (ASCA)
- Continue services to provide assistance to students/families in the areas of counseling and family support
- Identify community partnerships to increase student/family access to additional services
- Expansion of School-Based Youth Services (High School)

SUMMER SCHOOL

- Extend summer opportunities and provide academic enrichment

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Continue to fund Parent Liaisons District-wide
- Fund the position of Coordinator of Parents to help provide connections between home and school
- Identify opportunities to increase access to resources and information for families

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Offer extended learning opportunities to provide intervention services as well as acceleration opportunities for our students
- Maintain all existing athletic programs and identify opportunities to expand offerings

TRANSPORTATION

- Continue to transport all students who are remote beyond 2.1 miles for elementary and 2.5 miles for middle and high school
- Purchase (10) additional busses to better serve our students and school programs

SECURITY & SAFETY MEASURES

- Implement a new hybrid school security model District-wide
- Fund the position of Security Resource Officers in our middle and high schools
- Funding for Restorative Justice Practices and Bullying Prevention in our middle and high schools

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

- Repair, renovate, and provide general maintenance at every school
- Funding for evening cleaning services to support the learning environment for our students and staff
- Continue funding for the usage of green custodial and maintenance products
- Funding for implementing the Facilities Reconfiguration Plan
- Purchase four trailers to support enrollment at Robbins and Hill Elementary Schools

On April 11, 2018, the Board of School Estimate (BOSE) held the public hearing on the budget. The BOSE approved the following items:

- Adopt the 2018/2019 Tax Levy of **\$22,408,109** in support of the Budget
- Adopt the 2018/2019 Capital Projects Budget in the amount of **\$4,140,000**
- Increase the 2019/2020 Tax Levy to **\$22,856,272**

Staff Recruitment: The Talent Acquisition & Development Team developed a Recruitment Calendar for Spring 2018 based on needs identified through the budget development process. The Recruitment Calendar included attendance at (17) events including Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Student Serving Institutions (HSSIs). The team also revised recruitment brochures and documentation. As a result of the recruitment efforts, TAD has identified candidates available for most of our positions. Our goal is to have all known school-based positions filled by June 30, 2018.

Capital Improvement Update: We were notified by the City of Trenton Comptroller that the Bond Ordinance was adopted on Thursday, March 15, and now have access to the funding. The approval provides **\$2.9 million towards emergent facility improvements.**

Transportation Update: The District received \$1.7 million dollars (58.64%) increase in transportation aid for the 2018-19 school year over the prior year which is **directly attributed to the change in bell time and the tiered system of student transportation** as mandated by State law.

Crisis Support Update: In light of the Parkland HS tragedy, the District is currently reviewing its School Crisis Plans. **Nothing is more important than the safety of our students and staff.** New plans are in development to meet evolving challenges associated with school safety. A Crisis Planning Committee comprised of school and district staff is being formed to identify solutions for the areas of concern to include, but not be limited to a hybrid approach to staffing for school security (Security Guards, Resource Officers).

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 16:	Princeton Symphony Orchestra @ Dunn MS (10am & 1pm)
May 17-18, 21-22:	Early Childhood Studies Showcase
May 19:	OASIS Solar Car Race
May 30:	Humanities Fair @ TBOE Ellis Auditorium (5pm)
May 29:	Princeton University Preparatory Program Graduation Ceremony (7pm)
June 14:	Seal of Biliteracy Celebration @ TBOE Ellis Auditorium (5:30pm)