

BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Newsletter

October 2014

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

By Dr. Michael Kuchar, Superintendent of Schools



The 2014-15 school year is off to an excellent start, with continued momentum towards another banner year. As most of our 2014 Bergenfield High School graduates are off at college, getting acclimated to post-secondary life, their achievements still ring on. Based on last year's exams, fifty-nine high school students and alumni have been highlighted by the College Board on the annual AP School Scholar Roster. Thirty-one students were designated as "AP Scholars," with an average score of 3.27 on all AP exams; fifteen were designated as "AP Scholars with Honors," with an average score of 3.5 on all AP exams; and, thirteen were designated as "AP Scholars with Distinction," with an average score of 4.11. I urge you to review the names of these scholars on page 3 of this newsletter and keep the memory of their successes as Bergenfield students alive and well. They have set the bar high for those who follow, and are truly an inspiration for all our future graduates.

This year, the school district has seen several major changes—all designed with one purpose in mind: to increase college and career readiness for our students. As a result of contract negotiations during last school year, the Bergenfield Board of Education negotiated 40 additional minutes of instructional time for our students in the middle school and high school. The result of this change has led to longer classes and a total of 200 additional instructional minutes per week. This change will ensure that our students are well-prepared to succeed in college by allowing more time for learning, and by exposing them to longer instructional blocks of time that are closely aligned

with schedules in institutions of higher education.

In order to meet the growing educational demands addressed by the Common Core State Standards and the new PARCC assessments, the total number of lunch periods at the high school and middle school were reduced. While some expressed concerns about the increased number of students having lunch at any given time, any negative results have been addressed via consistent monitoring and adjustments. Meanwhile, safety and security issues have been considered and addressed, with plans in place for ongoing reassessments throughout the year. While increasing rigor is essential to the success of our children, we will continue to make sure that it is not at the risk of the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

To help speed up your child's time in the lunch lines, there are several new features of food services that can be of great benefit to parents. The first is the ability to pre-order your child's selection in advance, allowing for an express pickup at designated locations. Another great feature is the ability to pay for lunches in advance, cutting down on checkout time. This can be done in two ways: students can pre-pay at any register by check or cash, and have the money stored on their account and available as needed; or, parents can register at www.bergenfield.org/food and fund their child's account by way of credit or debit card. If you have any questions about these new services, feel free to contact Food Services at 201-387-3749.

I am eagerly looking forward to another amazing school year for our students.

With Bear Pride,

Dr. Michael Kuchar, Ph.D.

THE DAILY BEAST
TOP HIGH SCHOOLS

2014



Results of *The Daily Beast's* "America's Top High Schools 2014" survey placed Bergenfield High School at 402 in the nation, with a graduation rate of 98.4%, college bound rate of 89.6%, and average SAT score of 1460. BHS is one of 43 New Jersey schools recognized, and proudly stands amongst other top Bergen County contenders, such as the Bergen Academies in Hackensack, and the Glen Rock, Ramsey, Cresskill, Demarest, Old Tappan, and River Dell school districts.

Relying on criteria culled from existing school surveys, *The Daily Beast* compiled the 2014 list using six performance measures: graduation and college acceptance rates, college-level courses and exams, SAT/ACT scores, and percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch. The most heavily weighed factors—graduation and college acceptance rates—are critical indicators of college and career readiness. These are goals upon which the district hinges its continued long-term improvement efforts.

Members of the Bergenfield learning community are no strangers to success. This award comes on the heels of other recent accolades, which include being named one of the Most Challenging Schools in America by The Washington Post for a third year. The district has also been recently recognized for its use of digital technology and efforts to teach financial literacy to high school students.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Bergenfield High School Yearbook Staff Earn Top Distinction



Pictured above, Mr. Dapito, Yearbook Advisor, and BHS senior, Jelinda Easo.

Continuous improvement is a cornerstone of the educational philosophy

in our schools. As such, it is no surprise that our students and staff actively seek feedback and critiques through which they can improve their daily practice.

A proud supporter of Bergenfield's commitment to improvement, BHS yearbook advisor, Mr. Norm Dapito, submitted *Crossroads* for the Medalist Critique—a yearbook and online/print work review process facilitated by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The Medalist Critique is intended to help students improve their final product, and contains

a written set of standards that represent best practice for student media.

The results of the critique are encouraging: *Crossroads* received a gold medal based on a total score of 824 (scores between 800 and 1000 qualify for gold). The yearbook was judged on three categories: references, verbal, and visual, and scored the highest in verbal. With such a stellar performance on its first review, it is clear that more prestigious competitions are on the horizon for the *Crossroads* staff!

Honoring a True Bergenfield Advocate



Ms. Lucille Tendler was awarded the Bear Pride award at the September Board of Education Meeting. Ms. Tendler was recognized for her tenacious commitment to improving the local community.

Her steadfastness is demonstrated by her 14 years of service to the Bergenfield Public Library, where she served as a trustee on the board from 2000–14. Her roles included a term as Board President and Recording Secretary. Most notably,

Ms. Tendler acted as the driving force behind the Strategic Planning Initiative. In addition to her responsibilities with the board, Ms. Tendler also served as a volunteer tutor for English language learners with the library's ESL program, and worked on several county-wide initiatives through her association with the Bergen County Cooperative Library System.

As a member of the Contemporary Women's Club (CWC), Ms. Tendler served two terms as president, and was also involved in state-wide committees. She led numerous fund-raisers to support young people and women, including children suffering from cancer and the AIDS virus, and women in need of shelter. Ms. Tendler worked to honor the accomplishments of women in government and the armed forces, women in the arts, and Gold

Star mothers. Ms. Tendler's work with the CWC is of particular significance to the Bergenfield School District, as the club's scholarship fund has benefitted many BHS students over the years.

Ms. Tendler helped to enrich the Bergenfield community with her service to the Council of the Arts, through which she organized annual summer concerts in the park and variety shows. She also worked with the committee to sponsor annual art shows.

For her extensive service to Bergenfield and Bergen County at large, and especially for her dedication to those in need, the Bergenfield School District once again extends a heartfelt expression of gratitude and appreciation. The district wishes Ms. Tendler a truly enjoyable retirement.

See Something, Say Something: Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

We all have been horrified with the recent news accounts of the Sayreville, New Jersey football team and the arrests of seven students. Schools have a responsibility to provide appropriate supervision and we, in Bergenfield, have a system of accountability that requires all team rooms to be supervised by coaches. If there is not a coach in the team rooms, we have a male and female security officer that will fill in to supervise the locker room until a coach arrives. While this due diligence of supervision is important, another important aspect of school culture is for students to tell adults when inappropriate behavior

happens to them or their classmates. The federal government's "See Something, Say Something" program urges all to report any unusual behavior or activity, and this also applies to what our students and staff perceive. According to Homeland Security, this is the #1 deterrent to school violence.

Students have protection under state and federal laws. If you see or hear of inappropriate behavior that is happening to you or your classmates, tell an adult immediately. Harassing behaviors may include:

- Unwelcome conduct, including verbal

abuse, such as name-calling, epithets, slurs

- Graphic or written statements
- Threats
- Physical assault
- Other conduct that may be physically or emotionally threatening, harmful, or humiliating

For more information on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB), you may visit our website at www.bergenfield.org or contact our District Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Ms. Linda DePinto by e-mail at ldepinto@bergenfield.org or by phone at 201-385-8600 x1366.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS



★ BHS senior and soprano singer, Carolina Restrepo, has been selected for the 2014 NAFME All-National Honor Ensembles. Under the guidance of choir instructor, Mr. Malcolm Couden, Carolina is the second BHS student to participate in the All-National Ensembles since Mr. Couden joined the BHS staff. This distinction is another addition to Carolina's already impressive high school resume. She is a 4-year member of school's Concert Choir and Honors Vocal Ensemble, a 2-year member of the Bergen County Chorus, and has spent 3 years performing in both the North Jersey Region I Chorus and the New Jersey All-State Chorus. Carolina will perform with musicians from all over the country in Nashville, Tennessee from October 26–29. Her hard work, along with Mr. Couden's expert guidance, has added yet another accolade in the long-standing history of success of the district's music department.



★ On September 23rd and 24th, eighth grade students at Roy W. Brown attended a field trip without ever leaving the building! One class at a time, students entered STARLAB, an inflatable planetarium and were amazed to see the night sky lit just above their heads. The presenters, who brought STARLAB, shared information about the stars, constellations, and planets. The experience truly brought the science curriculum to life.



★ BHS Principal, Mr. James Fasano, recently announced that Samantha Cacdac has been named a Commended Scholar in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program. Mr. Fasano presented a letter of commendation from Bergenfield High School and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which conducts the program. About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who took the 2013 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.



Photo by Don Smith, staff photographer for *The Record*

★ On October 7th, BHS senior DJ Haskins was selected by *The Record* as the High School Male Athlete of the Week. Haskins' selection followed a stellar performance a few days prior, which contributed to a 20-14 overtime upset win against the number eight ranked Paramus Spartans. Haskins, who plays wide receiver and free safety, had eight receptions on the day for 154 yards and two touchdowns on offense. On defense, he recorded eleven tackles, and a game-clinching interception. On a side note, DJ's two touchdown catches were both thrown by his brother, Jovani, who was starting only his second game ever as quarterback.



★ Congratulations to the College Board AP School Scholar Roster 2014 Recipients:

“AP Scholar” designation (*Students who received a score of 3+ on three or more AP exams*): Laura Baracaldo, Richard Bravo, Alison Calma, Krista Carramusa, Juno Catral, Melanie Dore, Jithin Easo, Ahmed Eid, Thalissa Familia, Sebastian Garcia, Kimberly Gonzalez, Cenadra Gopala-Foster, Abigail Grimm, Kaleen Kassem, Michael Lovero, Alexander Moini, Brandon Ordonez, Kristen Palma, Veeral Patel, Summer Pirro, Gabriele Podwin, Josh Renzo Ramilo, Aida Ramirez, Rosaly Rosario, Carl Salazar, Lauryn Schaffner, Sundeep Singh, Lawrence Soracco, Gabriela Toledo, Nhu Truong, Alexandria Villagracia.

“AP Scholar with Honor” designation (*Students who received an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams*): Kayla Adecer, Vanessa Amoah Oti'Akent, Samantha Cacdac, Josh Clement, Jelinda Easo, Ariel Jimenez, Laura Medina, Thomas Monaghan, Kyla Moutenot, Shannon Philpott, Matthew Stypulkoski, Emma Taubner, Bianca Toledo, Monica Valencia, Ydelsie Vasquez.

“AP Scholar with Distinction” designation (*Students who received an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams*): Agustina Arzuaga, Elisa Betances, Joshua Calugay, Sara Cherian, Nisha Desai, Gisell Gomez, Kevin Joseph, Tunisia Kenyatta, Samia Khan, Tiffany Moral, Gisselly Perez-Astwood, Nikki Rodriguez, Barbara Tsousis.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

BHS on a Hot \$treak



For the second year in a row, Bergenfield High School has been named a 2013-14 Blue Star School by Working in Support of Education (w!se). BHS earned this national distinction for the students' performance on last year's w!se Financial Literacy Certification Test. In order to earn the Blue Star School recognition, a school must achieve a 75 percent passing rate on the test and have either a majority of students on a given grade level take the test or have the students who took it achieve an average score of 80 percent or higher.

Bergenfield Board of Education
100 South Prospect Avenue
Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621-1958

CALLING ALL VETERANS

If you live in Bergenfield and are a veteran of war, the school district would like to invite you to attend:

Veteran's Appreciation Day
November 11, 2014
Bergenfield High School
Athletic Field
1:30PM

If you plan to attend, please call the superintendent's office at 201-385-8202 with your name, branch and service information. We would love to honor your service to our country.

Day of Remembrance



While observing Patriot Day/September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, Hoover School students and faculty gathered by the flag, flying at half-staff, to join the nation in a moment of silence. First grader, Nicolas Cardona, played the National Anthem on the piano. Afterwards, Mr. Fleming, principal, and Mr. Schultz shared the meaning of Patriot's Day, and discussed the importance of everyday heroes. Mr. Fleming challenged the students to volunteer as a way to honor the heroes of 9/11, especially the U.S. Armed Forces and first responders.

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