

BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Newsletter

March 2015

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

By Dr. Michael Kuchar, Superintendent of Schools



"On the night you were born, the moon shone with such wonder that the stars peeked in to see you and the night wind whispered, 'Life will never be the same.' Because there had never been anyone like you... ever in the world." These were the words that resonated with me most, as I read Nancy Tillman's "On the Night You Were Born" to many bright, young faces on Dr. Seuss Day during Read Across America Week, March 2nd through 6th.

What an honor it was, as always, to work directly with our exceptional teachers and to share something as magical as reading with your children. Their joyous eyes and appreciative smiles sparkled with brilliant hopes for what the future holds. What enormous intensity and potential is woven into every word and every line, as this little book aims to nourish the aspirations and dreams of tomorrow's heroes:

"On the night you were born, the moon smiled with such wonder that the stars peeked in to see you and the night wind whispered, 'Life will never be the same.' Because there had never been anyone like you...ever in the world. So enchanted with you were the wind and the rain that they whispered the sound of your wonderful name. It sailed through the farmland high on the breeze... over the ocean... and through the trees... until everyone heard it and everyone knew of the one and only ever you. Not once had there been such eyes, such a nose, such silly, wiggly, wonderful toes. When the polar bears heard, they danced until dawn. From faraway places, the geese flew home. The moon stayed up until morning next day. And none of the ladybugs flew away. So whenever you doubt

just how special you are and you wonder who loves you, how much and how far, listen for geese honking high in the sky. (They're singing a song to remember you by.) Or notice the bears asleep at the zoo. (It's because they've been dancing all night for you!) Or drift off to sleep to the sound of the wind. (Listen closely... it's whispering your name again!) If the moon stays up until morning one day, or a ladybug lands and decides to stay, or a little bird sits at your window awhile, it's because they're all hoping to see you smile...for never before in story or rhyme (not even once upon a time) has the world ever known a you, my friend, and it never will, not ever again... heaven blew every trumpet and played every horn on the wonderful, marvelous night you were born."

This timeless childhood story serves as our call to action as parents and as educators; we face the enormous challenge of ensuring that our children are raised with confidence, love, support, and opportunities. We share your commitment to making certain every child is seen, heard, and valued, while we work to ignite a love of learning within a nurturing environment built upon mutual respect.

Throughout my 30+ years in education, I have been reminded daily that every child is unique in his/her own way, and this individuality should be celebrated. Nothing is more gratifying in my job than having a "front row seat" in watching future generations grow and develop into successful, productive, and thriving members of our community. From this perspective, each year, I get to see prime examples of exceptional parenting. Your job is filled with overwhelming challenges and it's exhausting. It's rare that anyone shows their gratitude, rewards you, or even acknowledges the hard work that goes into the daily-ins and -outs of raising a child. There are very few moments in a day that you ever get to rest, never

All schools will be closed from April 3rd through April 10th for Spring Recess.

Classes shall resume on Monday, April 13th.

Have a safe and healthy Spring Break!

mind to sit quietly to relax. Meanwhile, it's not too often that anyone reads you a soothing bedtime story. So, let me take just one moment to repeat this simple line for you again... because you deserve it: *"For never before in story or rhyme (not even once upon a time) has the world ever known a you, my friend, and it never will, not ever again..."* Thank you for your partnership. You are doing the most essential work and you're never alone.

Because of you and our exceptional staff and dedicated students, this school year has been a joy. Just in the month of March, I was fortunate to go from reading one children's tale on Dr. Seuss Day, to witnessing a real life fairy tale come true. The Bergenfield Boys Basketball Team won the Group 3 State Championship in "Cinderella fashion" for the first time in 70 years. Meanwhile, our music department has sent more students to Regionals, County, and State competitions than ever before. I could not be more proud!

This is a great time for Bergenfield students, as they are truly exceptional and are accomplishing great things. Let's continue to work together to write the unique story of our community, because once a child's mind has been opened through learning, life will simply never be the same. Thank you for helping us whisper this truth into the winds of change.

With Bear Pride,

WE'RE NUMBER ONE!

BHS Boys Basketball Team Wins Group 3 State Championship Title



Photos in this article courtesy of Mrs. Jennifer Murray, Secretary to the Athletic Director

It was 70 years in the making, as Bergenfield High School's Boys Basketball Team raised the school's first state championship trophy since 1945, after defeating Ewing Township High School in a thrilling overtime victory by a score of 80-72. The Rutgers University Athletic Center was packed with screaming supporters, as bus and carloads of Bergenfield fans—including the BHS Pep Band—made the trip to Piscataway Township on March 15th for the NJSIAA Group 3 Finals.



The win was a continuation of a magical run through the NJSIAA State Tournament for the Bears. To get to the Group 3 State Final, the Bears first won a thrilling set of games in their home gym to win the Group 3, North 1 Sectional Title during the first two weeks of March. The team defeated Demarest (67-51); Tenafly (62-61)—in a game that saw their large first half lead evaporate in the closing minutes of the game; and, Garfield (65-38). In the Sectional Title game, the boys

played four-time defending champion and crosstown rival, Teaneck, in a memorable contest. Teaneck had defeated the Bears in conference play twice this season, but this go-around saw the Bears build a 37-18 halftime lead. Teaneck's pressure defense led a furious comeback, but the Bears held on for a 71-69 triumph and its first Sectional Title since 1999.



In the Group 3 State Semifinals, Bergenfield faced Colonia High School, the North 2 Sectional Title winner, for the opportunity to play the Final at Rutgers Athletic Center. Colonia controlled most of the contest until the closing minutes of the 3rd quarter, when senior forward, DJ Haskins, and junior center, Jovani Haskins, willed the team offensively in the 4th quarter to a 52-51 victory, punching the team's ticket to the final matchup against the Ewing Blue Devils.

Many basketball experts doubted the Bears chances for victory in the Group 3 Final. Ewing went into the game with a 29-2 record, and had a blue chip, Divi

sion I recruit on its roster. Led by the Haskins brothers, and disciplined play by guards, James Hamilton and Lenard Bollola, the Bears took the lead from tipoff. They countered each Ewing run with the superior rebounding and inside scoring of the Haskins brothers. Senior Herby Cabral, playing with a sore wrist, did an incredible job defending Ewing's star and containing his scoring.



After the game, the NJSIAA presented the State Championship Trophy at center court. The Bears returned home from Piscataway to a heroes' welcome in the BHS parking lot; hundreds of parents, students, faculty, and friends greeted the state champs as the team bus pulled in. The team's path certainly resembled the story of the Hickory Huskers in the famous movie "Hoosiers." For Head Coach Marty Rivard, the win over Ewing was his first State Championship after leading his former team—Cresskill High School—to the Group Final twice.



Congratulations to the 2014-15 Bergenfield High School Boys Basketball Team! Thanks to these young men and the coaching staff, Bear Pride is swelling throughout the entire community, and will surely last for many years to come. The team should be extremely proud of what they have accomplished—we've all certainly enjoyed riding along in the passenger's seat.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS



★ All five district elementary schools participated in National Education Association's Read Across America Week from March 2nd through 6th. Read Across America week is an annual reading motivation and awareness program, with the week kicking off with a celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday. The elementary schools were visited by guest readers that included Mayor Schmelz, members of the Bergenfield Police Department, retired teachers, and district school leaders.

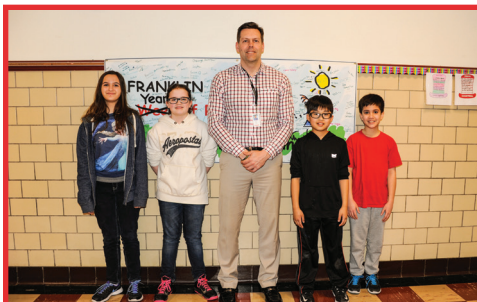


★ The 2015 Bergen County Youth Art Month Exhibit, sponsored by the Art Educators of New Jersey (AENJ), opened on March 12th at the One River Art School & Gallery in Englewood. The work of nineteen Hoover and Washington School student artists, from grades K-5, were selected for the exhibit by art teacher Ms. Anolik.

★ Each month, the faculty from Roy W. Brown nominates nine students for demonstrating positive character traits and leadership initiatives throughout the month. These "Most Valuable People" are treated to a pizza party in the principal's office, and receive an MVP certificate and t-shirt. This February's MVPs were: Arij Ali, Kekhari Arnold, Shamar Binns, Sara Cadavid, John Capala, Chelsea Fernandez, Susana Pardo, Kirsten Viray, and Tatiana Yascaribay. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor!



★ On March 10th, the BHS Athletic Department held its 4th annual Athletic Hall of Fame dinner at Seasons Restaurant in Washington Township. Ten new individuals were inducted as well as the 1986 State Champion Football Team. Attendees of the event included past honorees and many school and community members. The evening was a special night honoring some of BHS's best athletes. Attendees enjoyed catching up with old friends and sharing stories and many laughs. With "Bear Pride," we extend our congratulations to our new inductees: Jackie Ferranti ('04), Bob Thourot (Coach), George Grube Sr. ('60), Janet Andrews Welsh ('97), Bob Alvord (Coach), Anthony Grego ('88), Brendan Ferriter ('89), John Mulfinger ('61), William Schnelbacher ('54), Rocco Montesano (Contributor), and the 1986 Bears Football Team.



★ The Franklin School Student Council was founded this year by fifth grade teacher, Mr. Olson, and fourth grade teacher, Ms. Villone. The Council provides the children in these grades the opportunity to discuss ideas and issues of interest in their homerooms, and then bring them to a general meeting, in a structured setting, under the supervision of Mr. Olson. Back in the fall, students interested in running for office made speeches to their classmates. Shortly thereafter, elections were held for class representatives and Student Council officers.



★ A Hoover Elementary School teacher, Ms. Nicole Bischoff, became the first teacher in the Bergenfield Public School District and the state of New Jersey to earn the title of "Empowered Educator" for Renaissance Learning's Accelerated Reader program. The school district utilizes the Renaissance Learning software to differentiate learning for students. In order to earn the title of Empowered Educator for Accelerated Reader, Ms. Bischoff's students engaged in daily reading for an average of fifty-five minutes a day, 91 percent of her students averaged a score of 85 or better on Accelerated Reader quizzes, and 83 percent of the students earned points from independent reading. According to Renaissance Learning, "When educators reach these data targets that research shows lead to optimal student growth in reading and math, they earn recognition on our National Honor Roll and receive an Educator Achievement Package." Congratulations Ms. Bischoff!



★ On February 26th, at RWB, 54 students were inducted into the National Junior Society, joining 30 existing members. Advisor, Hilary Arrabito, and Keynote Speaker, Gregory Mulford, made the ceremony memorable. Dr. Kuchar and Mr. Fasano joined Ms. Wright and Mr. Biggins on stage to congratulate these students, who excelled in the areas of scholarship, service, character, citizenship, and leadership.

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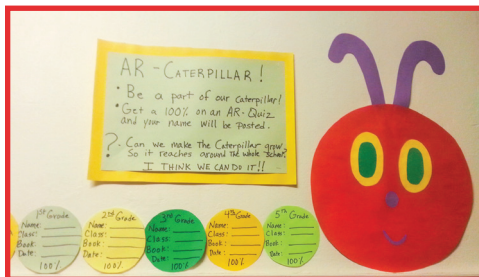
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AROUND THE DISTRICT

AR Caterpillar



Students at Jefferson School have successfully completed wrapping the “AR Caterpillar” around the school. Each time a student read a book and scored 100% on an Accelerated Reader (AR) quiz, they got to fill out a circle, representing a segment on the body of the caterpillar. Each circle contains the child’s name, book read, grade, and class. As of mid-March, Jefferson has over 1,539 perfect quiz scores that have helped contribute to this school-wide success. The school’s next challenge is to make “Billy the Bookwork” grow around the opposite side of the hallway.



We're Number One:
BHS Boys Basketball Team
Win State Championship!

Read the full story on page 2.

GO BEARS!

The Million Word Club



At Washington School, students have been climbing their way up the reading levels—from the Hundred Thousand, Half Million, and all the way up to the Million Word Club. Words read are tracked through the use of the computerized Accelerated Reader program. Three students—third grader Julianna Nunez, fourth grader Thomas Lapinig, and fifth grader Romeo Lopez—have exceeded one million words read for this school year. Romeo is well on his way to the Ten Million Word Club having read 2,330,166 words through March 1st!