

BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Newsletter

August 2015

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

By Dr. Michael Kuchar, Superintendent of Schools



On behalf of the Bergenfield Public School District, I am writing to personally invite you, our parents, grandparents, community, and business leaders, to get ready to once again participate in the magical concept called “school.” In this edition of our district newsletter you will see the tremendous achievement of our students. It is nice to remember the past as we continue to build our future.

Many of us, regardless of age, still get excited about the first day of school. For most, it has been a very long time since the new notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, lunch boxes, folders, and other supplies got us excited. As I walk through the hallways of our schools, seeing my reflection in the perfectly polished floors and glancing into doorways to admire gleaming classrooms filled with new technologies, I know there’s much more to be excited about than material things.

A new school year is synonymous with America’s promise. It’s all the hope of our nation and dreams of our forefathers captured in a system of opportunity. How fortunate we are to live in a great nation that values a free K-12 education system. School ensures every child has a shot to go beyond the limits of family circumstance to pursue happiness. Education is the great leveler of our nation, guarantee-

ing that any child can work hard and rise as high as his or her aspirations.

The first day of school is so routine and customary for us that we may take our good fortune for granted. Yet, across the globe children are not given the same opportunities. Even as I draft this message, my mind drifts to thoughts of children like Noble Prize winner Malala Yousafzai—the young woman who was shot by the Taliban for standing up for education for girls.

Malala stated, “In some parts of the world, students are going to school every day. It’s their normal life. But in other parts of the world, we are starving for education... it’s like a precious gift. It’s like a diamond.”

For Malala and many other children across the globe, what we have every day, our school... is like a diamond. As the keepers of this precious gem, we are charged with using its reflective magic to catch the light of tomorrow. It is our duty to teach the children of this community to cherish their opportunity to shine.

Like Malala, many in our nation’s history fought for this right and lost their lives to bequeath this gift to us. Here, in Bergenfield, let’s make sure that the sparkle of this special gift... this diamond is never, ever, ever diminished. Let us all be committed to keep the American dream alive and in our own special way- let’s support our youth as they start a new school year!

With Bear Pride,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Kuchar", followed by the initials "R.D." in a stylized, cursive script.

Congratulations to the
Class of 2015!

The Board of Education
hopes everyone is
enjoying a safe, happy, and
productive summer break.

See you all on September 3rd!

Curriculum and Instruction Updates

This summer, Bergenfield offered over 25 summer professional development workshops for teachers and administrators. The array of topics included Balanced Literacy, Orton Gillingham, Google Apps, Standard-Aligned Assessment, Virtual Library, Renaissance Learning, and Analysis of Writing. These activities are designed to improve the quality of classroom instruction, enable individuals to grow professionally, and introduce practitioners to the applications of research-based strategies.

During the summer, our students have been working online at home on Study Island and IXL, continuing to build skills in preparation for next year. We also coordinated with Bergenfield Public Library to select books that will keep our students engaged throughout the summer months.

Bergenfield trained ten achievement coaches in a collaborative research project with the Department of Education this summer. The team will add to our professional development throughout the school year on topics related to assessments and student engagement.

We look forward to an exciting year!

Mary Anne DeVivio
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Valedictorian Addresses the Class of 2015



Everyone says or thinks that senior year should be the easiest; but, for some reason, it was the most challenging year of my life. It was filled with never-ending work, a part-time job, college applications, essays, student congress, fundraisers, yearbook, STEM, AP exams, scholarships, and playing catch up when it all fell apart. There was a point where my mom wanted me to quit my job so badly that she was willing to pay me. Even though it wasn't about the money, there was a point that I actually considered quitting.

Because my mom is always right, I didn't want to admit that my workload was beginning to be too much. I wanted to prove her wrong—so I took it one day at a time, and faced each problem as it presented itself. Despite the struggles and hardships, I'm thankful for the nights that turned into morning, friends that turned into family, and dreams that turned into reality.

And now, I stand before [my class] as the valedictorian, to close this chapter at Bergenfield High School on behalf of the Class of 2015. I never in a million years thought I would be here speaking in front of [a large audience], let alone as valedictorian. When I found out my rank last year, I was in such shock that I was sure it was a mistake. I was so scared of disappointment that I didn't let myself believe it.

I can honestly say that I'm still in shock. I'm surrounded by the smartest, brightest, and most talented minds at Bergenfield High School. We all have different things to bring to the table and that's part of what makes BHS special. I am truly honored to be graduating among the leaders, state champions, scientists, artists,

thinkers, and innovators of tomorrow.

Many of you have asked me how I did it, and what the secret was. Is there an easy recipe to follow or shortcut to take? Well, I'm sorry to say that there wasn't an exact science, set formula, or easy guide to follow. To be honest, I don't know how I did it; I just know that it was a long, hard battle. The key, though, is to win or lose, but never fail. And the only way to fail is to not fight. So fight until you can't fight anymore!

In fact I can tell you that the Class of 2015 knows this very well. We have all fought—fought so hard until we couldn't fight anymore. We faced many changes and challenges along the road, and realized that nothing is set in stone; but, we chose to never give up. Here at BHS, the 2015 school year has seen countless victories, both big and small.

It is going to be weird not to wake up and get ready for a day of high school. It is going to be weird for me not to rush in the morning and drop my brother, Johnny, off at the middle school and hope to God a train doesn't stop before I can make it across the tracks. It will be weird to not see a smiling face every morning greeting me at the door. It would feel wrong if deciding where to go for lunch wasn't the biggest problem of the day.

It hasn't exactly hit me yet, but it will be devastating to not be able to go to Tuesday and Thursday yearbook meetings in the computer graphics room; to not stress over planning class events; to not whine about early morning sectionals and the band festivals that I know I'll wish I can go back to and relive.

You get a strange feeling when you are about to leave a place—like you'll not only miss the people you love, but the person you are now at this time and place, because you'll never be this way ever again. So remember this moment in time and the beautiful people surrounding you, because this is the end of something great, but also the beginning of something better.

—Jelinda Easo—

Salutatorian's Address



A future that's so open, can seem frightening and definitely uncertain. I can't promise much, but I can promise this: All of you are worth something. All of you are special. Do not doubt that!

I can't count all the times I've been amazed by all of my classmates. From every class I've been in, I've been amazed, over and over. Stunned by your passion in sports and music, your support to one another, your ability to make others laugh effortlessly, your artistic talent, quiz-bowl knowledge, social aptitude, emotional support of one another, your leadership, friendliness, and teamwork.

You're all stars who shine so bright. And it doesn't matter whether you're the biggest or brightest—just as it doesn't matter whether you're the smartest, fastest, or most popular—because you all have your own pull, your own charm, and characteristics that make you who you are; and, that's special even if you don't realize it yourself.

There's beauty in this world, and joy to be found in places you least expect it. Maybe in a teacher, advisor, fellow student, in family, or a friend. I know that I, personally, could not have made it this far without them. And that I could not have matured and learned to appreciate life and humanity as much without all of you.

I am proud to be a member of the Bergenfield High School Class of 2015. You are all special and that is certain, even in the uncertainty of this world. I hope that all of you find happiness, joy, and purpose, and reach that bright future that awaits you outside the walls of Bergenfield High School.

—Nikki Rodriguez—

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2015!

Karlo Mendoza

Tri-M Music and Math Honor Societies; track and cross country athlete; attending Ramapo College



Martha Papapetrou

4-year varsity soccer athlete; National Honor Society; attending the College of New Jersey



Jelinda Easo

Valedictorian; AP Scholar; STEM; Honors Wind Ensemble; full scholarship to Stevenson University



Dwaine Haskins

Captain of State Championship Basketball Team; athletic scholarship to attend Stonehill College

Joshua Calugay

AP Scholar; STEM; Principal String in Symphony Orchestra; attending Georgia Tech



WE ARE BERGENFIELD

Nikki Rodriguez

Salutatorian; perfect score on SAT Critical Reading section; AP Scholar; STEM; attending NJIT



Kaleen Kassem

Health Career Academy; intern at Englewood Hospital; VP of Class of 2015; attending Temple University

James Hamilton

Band section leader; AP Scholar; Captain of State Championship Basketball Team; attending Penn State



Veeral Patel

AP Scholar; National Honor Society; accomplished app developer; attending Stanford University



Patricia Morales

AP Scholar; VP of Math Honor Society; Health Career Academy; attending Lehigh University



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

*Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Paramus, N.J.
Permit No.
357*

Postal Customer
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

Visit us online at www.bergenfield.org

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

Colleges and Universities to Be Attended by the Class of 2015

Felician College	Dominican College	Centenary College
Long Island University	Kean University	Georgia Institute of Technology
Pace University	New York Institute of Technology	Montclair State University
Seton Hall University	Rutgers University	Ramapo College
Temple University	Stevenson University	St. John's University
William Paterson University	Valley Forge Christian College	University of Connecticut
Fashion Institute of Technology	Dean College	Caldwell University
LIM College	Johnson & Wales University	Fordham University
Oberlin College	New Jersey Institute of Technology	Middle Georgia College
School of Visual Arts	Rochester Institute of Technology	Pennsylvania State University
Stonehill College	Stanford University	Southern Virginia University
West Chester University of Pennsylvania	University of the Sciences in Philadelphia	University of Bridgeport
Fairleigh Dickinson University	Cornell University	Brigham Young University
Lehigh University	John Jay College of Criminal Justice	Florida Southern College
Norwich University	New Jersey City University	Marietta College
Saint Peter's University	Rider University	Pennsylvania College of Technology
Stockton University	St. Thomas Aquinas College	Southern Connecticut State University
Washington Adventist University	University of Houston	The College of New Jersey