

Midland School Matters

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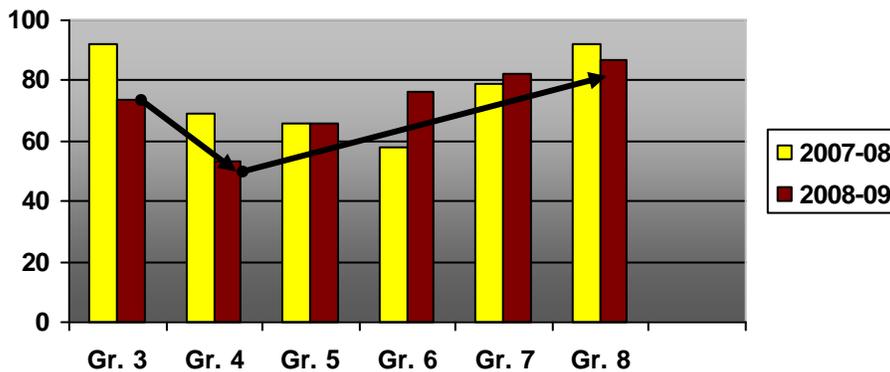
Taking the Right Steps Forward

State test results in Literacy for 2008-09 indicate a steady trend upward in Proficiency from grades 4-8. The district

is currently working with teachers in grades pre-K through 5 starting in October and finishing in March. The program will provide staff with a common vocabulary

and instruction.

Staff will participate in three hour sessions monthly with Pre-K through grade 2 teachers



will accelerate this trend with the implementation of the Writing Project, which is a nationally recognized program designed by Teachers College at Columbia University. Staff developer Samantha Passo is sched-

uled to work with teachers in grades pre-K through 5 starting in October and finishing in March. The program will provide staff with a common background in writing

and writing approach. Basic Skills and Resource Center teachers are also included in the workshops so classroom teachers, support teachers and all students in grades Pre-K–grade 5 will share a common background in writing in one group and staff from grades 3 –5 forming a second group. Fifteen hours of interaction will familiarize each of the groups with mini-lessons, guided writing, independent writing and writing conferencing, while integrating current grammar and spelling practices into the process. Each session is followed by a staff survey evaluating the presentation and identifying needed clarifications.

The consultant is extensively trained and her classroom served as a demonstration site for the staff developers from Columbia University. Mrs. Passo is a National Board Certified Teacher.

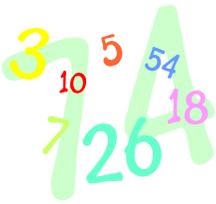


OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

- *Taking the Right Steps Forward in Literacy and Math*
- *Two year Comparison of NJASK Literacy and Math Results for all students*
- *PTA Calendar of Upcoming Events*
- *Rochelle Park Board of Education Transition Running Smoothly*



Middle School Increases Math Time



Math is now being taught seven periods a week instead of five. The double period math classes are in place of the math enrichment class that was offered for the last three years.

The seven periods of math give the teachers an opportunity to work with their own students on the curriculum and prepare the students

for the NJASK, the state test given in May. Each student has their own NJASK resource book to work from throughout the year and to refer to when needed. A lot of material has to be covered from now until June, and having their own students for 7 periods a week, is a great way to accomplish what needs to be done! Students will also continue to take Friday assessments and come after school the following week for extra help if the quiz grade received falls below 70%. There has been a great deal of success with students in-

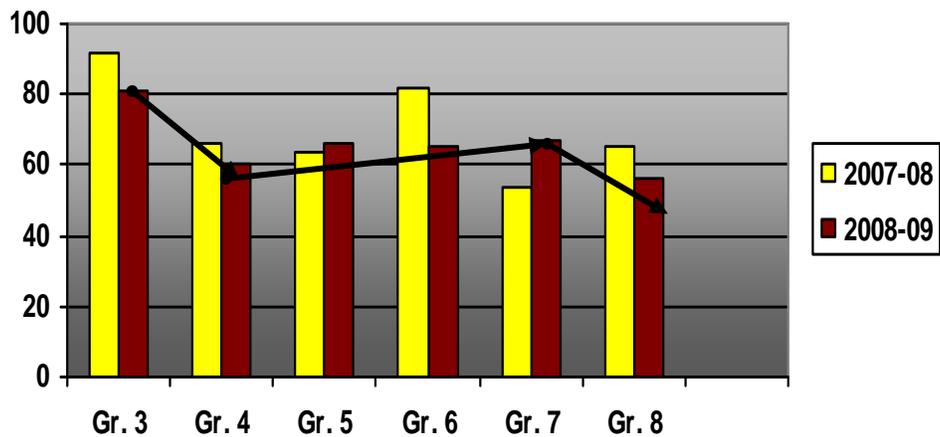
creasing their effort and their quiz scores. Staff is working together to standardize the amount of time spent on a given standard and to identify benchmark tests in the areas of the five state math standards:

- Number Sense
- Algebra & Patterns
- Geometry & Measurement
- Data Analysis & Probability
- Problem Solving

Taking the Right Steps Forward in Math

A review of the state test results has prompted the district to take the following actions:

- Increase the math periods in grades 6-8 from 5 to 7/week
- Complete the purchase of the math series in 2009.
- Revise the math curriculum to include the time on each standard, reinstate timed tests in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and test the benchmarks for each standard.



Roof Leaks Addressed and Parapets Rebuilt

During the last two years the district has been plagued by leaking roofs due to weathering, cracked mortar and layers of separated flashings.

The blue parapet tarps have disappeared as the structures were virtually rebuilt from the roof up. Bricks were removed, cleaned and reused to maintain the original façade. The upper and lower roofs on the main building were

replaced in some areas and repaired in others. The project was cost effective, “green” and maintains the character of the building.

The leaks in the relatively new Multi Purpose room were caused by the separation of the drains from the roofing material. Retarring the area created a watertight seal.



Student Gives Pilot Program in Science a “Thumbs Up”

During the month of July, third grade teachers, Catherine Stephens and Thomas Hornes attended the introductory phase of a year-long association with the Prism Center for Science Teaching and Learning at Montclair University, which is

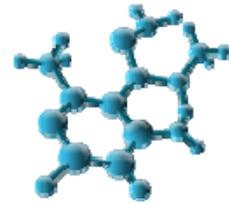


funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb. This program emphasizes inquiry based and problem solving teaching strategies and includes classroom visits from the professional staff at Prism both in Math and Science. Staff from the Prism Center schedule eight follow-up visits with the two teachers during the year. Four visits relate to Math and four are associated with Science. In addition to the training they received, Mr. Hornes and Mrs. Stephens left the center with several science kits that included the microscopes the children are now using.

Students are learning how to prepare slides, focus microscopes and will be examining several organisms including vinegar eels. How are students

responding to this pilot program based on the use of activities and data collection to reach conclusions? Hunter said, “It’s a fun way of learning.” Peter gave it a thumbs up. Savannah added, “ We do projects instead of the boring old book.” An’Jolae commented, “It’s creative and fun and makes me like science.”

The teachers are currently applying for the “Mangrove Connection”, which will allow students to be involved in a video broadcast from Thailand.



Working Together

Every school year provides an opportunity to join a community of people who support your child’s learning. Studies show that the more parents are involved with their child’s school the better the school is and the better the child does in school. Here are some things you can do to improve your child’s school experience.

- *Introduce yourself to your child’s teacher as the school year begins.*
- *Share your child’s strengths and challenges with the teacher.*
- *Use the school calendar to mark important dates, such as Parent-Teacher conferences.*
- *Ask your child about their day. Were there any tests? Are any projects or homework due?*
- *Encourage your child to read independently.*

Help out with school activities such as PTA meetings and fund raisers. You don’t need to give a lot of time. Your positive attitude and the quality of your involvement are what count most.

“Working together we can support learning and ensure your child’s success in school.”

New Record - One Million Very Hungry Caterpillars ??

Students and teachers in the primary grades are seeking to set a new world record by participating in the *2009 Jumpstart Read for the Record* contest by reading the same book on October 8th. Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* is this year’s selection.

Last October, 700,000 children and adults participated in the *2008 Jumpstart Read for the*

Record and broke the existing world record for the number of people reading the same book on the same day.

Reading aloud to young children helps them develop the strong literacy skills they need to be

successful in school and in life. Children also love the idea of being part of a world community of readers and breaking a record.

Jumpstart is an organization that brings college students and adults together with children to cultivate their social, emotional and intellectual readiness through tutoring and mentoring.



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Board of Education Transition Running Smoothly

The Board of Education is very proud of the successful opening of the new school year. We are encouraged by the warm welcome and support given to our interim administrators, Ms. Mozak and Ms. Cochran by the faculty, staff, families and especially, the students. This enthusiasm and cooperation greatly enhances the opportunities for success that we can provide for all students.

Our school goals this year will continue to focus on language arts and math as well as character development. Our administrators

and teachers are collaborating to introduce several innovative and proven methods to increase student achievement in these areas. Short term goals or benchmarks will be set and periodically measured to ensure that these new methods are achieving the desired results.

In this year of transition, we thank Ms. Mozak and Ms. Cochran for their extraordinary efforts to become a part of our community and develop a plan to improve the students' academic and social environment. Although, they will

be difficult to replace, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Fredrik Oberkehr as Superintendent effective December 14, 2009. Dr. Oberkehr, an enthusiastic, passionate and experienced educator, comes to Midland School with a record of success in increasing student achievement. We look forward to Dr. Oberkehr's leadership in "taking the rights steps forward" to greater student achievement and success.

Patricia Dee Bilka, President
Board of Education

The Midland School #1 PTA is a parent and teacher association which provides the children with various programs throughout the school year.

Children are treated to a wide variety of programs from cultural art programs to health and safety shows. The children can also participate in sponsored events from Skate Night, or our Trunk or Treat on October 25, to a talent show in February, movie nights and dances. The children are able to receive these services because you joined the PTA and you support the various fundraising events held throughout the year. Please join us and help us in our efforts. Our next General Meeting is November 12, 2009 at 7:00PM in the Multi-Purpose room. All are welcome. We look forward to meeting you. Have a wonderful and prosperous year!

Francine Pascarella

President Midland School #1 PTA



Spanning the Globe Researching Landmarks



Sixth graders in Ms. Talucci's Social Studies class started the year with a focus on global geography. Students studied the Movement, Region, Human-Environmental interactions, Location and Place of Geography in order to complete their "MR. HELP" projects.

Each student chose a different world landmark to study and research. (Statue of Liberty, Leaning Tower of Pisa, etc.). The students shared their findings with their classmates through their common knowledge of the 5 Themes of Geography.