



# GMRSD Board Of Education

## Home of the Jaguars

### Superintendent News

#### Strategic Planning Update

As you know, the GMRSD asked the New Jersey School Board Association to assist us in developing a five year living document known as the Strategic Plan. Our district, in conjunction with community members, faculty and staff has met three times during the fall of 2013. Our meetings have been productive and continue to focus on an array of items from technology upgrades and infrastructure, facility improvement, elective courses, staffing and budget concerns. As we enter the new calendar year my office will be responsible for the development and implementation of an action plan stemming from the results of the meetings. If you have not attended the meetings you can go to the strategic planning link on the main page of our district website to view the outcomes. That being said, our district looks forward to the challenges and opportunities in making GMRSD the best it can possibly be.

#### Budget Development

As the new budget cycle approaches, central office will take on the process of developing an efficient and effective budget for the community members of the Great Meadows Regional School District. Throughout this process, the GMRSD finance committee will work closely with central office as recommendations are being made which reflect programmatic and instructional needs of the district. Although the increased cost of daily living affects all of us, we will look to maintain the current level of class size and provide quality programs for students and staff. To that end, we will continue to implement a comprehensive professional development program, infuse technology when applicable and continue to explore opportunities for shared services. In closing, the district's goal is to provide our students with an optimal learning environment while honoring our fiscal responsibility to the community.



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### CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWS

Central School continues to implement and explore practices that are geared toward primary level students in establishing the necessary foundation for all future learning to build upon. Our approach to intervention and enrichment has included the provision of services beyond our students' normally scheduled school day. Through enhance screenings and assessments, we've identified a much larger population of students that could benefit from additional instruction and have taken the necessary steps to schedule and monitor students in these beneficial programs. Research shows that the earlier students receive necessary assistance, the less likely they will require it later down the road in the upper grades.

Want to stay informed? Come to our next Principal Forum meeting which will be on January 21<sup>st</sup> in the Central School Library at 7:00. Topics to be discussed will include OLSAT testing, AIMSWEB assessments, the LEXIA reading program, IXL MATH, and other assessment pieces. We will also talk about intervention and enrichment as well as benchmarking and progress monitoring. At our previous meeting we provided some food for thought about becoming a peanut-free school, the development of an online academy, and the trends with Ebooks and online resources vs. in-print media. There's a lot on our plate to talk about. We'd love to have you join us. Please rsvp to our main office by January 17<sup>th</sup> if you'd like to attend – and bring a friend!

We need your sweat equity. In the late 1990s, the now-retired Mrs. Spangler secured a grant to help create a Nature area and walk adjacent to Central School. Mother Nature has slowly taken it over, and we'd like to take it back. Beginning this Spring, a request will be sent out calling for family volunteers to help us begin the process of removing the brush, trimming the trees, and reclaiming what was once a valued and enjoyed learning resource. Please consider sharing your time with us. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Look for a flyer to come home in late February with more information.

### LIBERTY SCHOOL NEWS

On December 19<sup>th</sup> Liberty School will hold our first All School Meeting of the year hosted by our Girls on the Run Team. All School Meetings are a wonderful way for the staff and students to come together as a school community and share in each other's successes and accomplishments. The meetings consist of a host class, or group, that leads the school in saluting the flag, singing a patriotic song, greeting one another, sharing something special they have prepared, and celebrating in their classmates' awards and recognition. The meetings last only 20-30 minutes, but are just one more way we can build on the positivity that is Liberty School! While we would love to invite all parents to every meeting, space is limited so we are only able to invite the parents of those students who are hosting the meeting along with those receiving awards and/or recognition. All School Meetings will be held in December, February, April, and June of this school year.

The next Principal Forum at Liberty School will be held on January 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Liberty School multi-purpose room. The purpose of this forum will be to discuss what we are doing to support your children in preparation for state testing in May 2013. We will include a discussion of the parent information booklet that will come home with your children and sample questions that they will be asked. In order to prepare the children to perform at their best we need to work together and support them at school and at home.

The Liberty Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) met for the first time this school year to discuss issues relevant to Liberty and the success of our students and programs. The committee consists of two parent volunteers from each grade who meet monthly with the Liberty School Principal and Guidance Counselor. If you have any ideas or concerns that you feel should be brought up at our monthly PAC meeting please contact one of your grade level representatives listed below:



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**Third Grade:** Gloria Leggio [glody62@gmail.com](mailto:glody62@gmail.com)  
 Vani Sood [vanisood2703@yahoo.com](mailto:vanisood2703@yahoo.com)  
**Fourth Grade:** Jessica DeNicola [jessica32975@gmail.com](mailto:jessica32975@gmail.com)  
 Colleen Calabrese [calabreseariz@embarqmail.com](mailto:calabreseariz@embarqmail.com)  
**Fifth Grade:** Lisa McMahon [mmu1scott@aol.com](mailto:mmu1scott@aol.com)  
 Cathleen Winter-Rafalko [catwinter@comcast.com](mailto:catwinter@comcast.com)

Our monthly meeting agendas as well as meeting minutes can be found on the Principal's website under the left tab marked "PAC Meeting Agendas & Minutes".

### MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

Great Meadows Community, first I would like to wish you a very happy holiday season. We are already into the 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period and our students are progressing fine. In case you missed previous updates, here is what has been going on at Great Meadows Middle School:

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mr. Marmolejos, Mrs. Grigoletti and Mrs. Pach held the first of three principal forums to discuss Common Core Standards, new quarterly benchmark assessments for the 2013-14 school year, which count for 10% of student grades and standards based grading. The next principal forum will be January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. and will address school safety, cyber safety and bullying.

Also new for this year is our character education program. The character education program, being run by our new school counselor, Mrs. Kate Severson, which is based off of The Rachel's Challenge Program, incorporates Random Acts of Kindness recognition in which positive behaviors are celebrated. Mrs. Severson organized a FOR Club (Friends of Rachel) in which student leaders are working within the school along with student council and SLC (Student Leadership Corps) on a variety of service programs.

We now also have a Builder's Club in which students work with the Hackettstown Key Club on a wide variety of community service in our leadership programs projects.

Thank you to all the students involved in our leadership programs.

Finally, I would like to congratulate and thank the Girls on Track students and teacher supervisors for their food drive collection for the Vienna Church Food Bank. The Girls on Track members were able to fill two police (SUV) cruisers with non-perishable food items and supplies to go to families in need. Thank you to all for your donations and assistance.

Mr. Marmolejos

### CHILD STUDY TEAM NEWS

The Special Education Parent Advisory Meeting was held on November 13, 2013 at 6:00 PM. Parents of children with an IEP met with the Child Study Team and discussed issues related to the children participating in the special education and speech programs.

The district is very excited to report that many members of our special education staff are trained in a multi sensory systematic reading program. Teachers are trained in Wilson Reading, Foundations, Project Read and Orton Gillingham from the Institute for Multi Sensory Education. Many of our teachers and aides are trained in ABA - Applied Behavior Analysis and they work closely with our BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) to address student behaviors. The continuum of in district services has been expanded to include two self contained special education classes.

The Child Study Team continues to work with teachers and related service providers to improve the reporting on student progress. We are also exploring some new and exciting options for our preschool population for the upcoming school year.

The Child Study Team presented a workshop entitled "Toys and Games that Teach." If you would like a copy of the handouts distributed at the meeting, please contact Debbie Berger at 637-6020 or [dberger@gmrdsd.com](mailto:dberger@gmrdsd.com).

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**Postal Patron Local**

## Dates To Remember

12/24/13 thru 01/01/14 - Winter Break	02/12/14 – PTO Meeting
01/02/14 – Students return to school	02/14/14-02/17/14 – Closed Presidents' Weekend
01/07/14 – BOE Meeting	02/21/14 – GMMS/Hackettstown Lock-In
01/08/14 – PTO Meeting	02/26/14-02/27/14 – Kdg. Registration
01/09/14 – GATE Game Show Fundraiser	03/06/14 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester Ends Kdg. Thru 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grades
01/09/14 – Middle School Principal Forum	03/07/14 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester Begins Kdg. Thru 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grades
01/14/14 – Liberty Principal's Forum	03/07/14 – PATHS Get Together
01/16/14 – PATHS Meeting	03/12/14 – PTO Meeting
01/20/14 – Closed-Professional Development	03/14/14 – Early Dismissal Professional Development
01/21/14 – Central Principal's Forum	03/14/14 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Trimester Report Cards Sent Home K-3
01/23/14 thru 01/24/14 – Art Show	03/20/14 – PATHS Meeting
01/24/14 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Marking Period Ends 4 <sup>th</sup> thru 8 <sup>th</sup>	03/21/14 – GMMS Talent Show
01/27/14 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Marking Period Begins 4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	
02/04/14 – Report Cards Go Home 4 <sup>th</sup> thru 8 <sup>th</sup>	