



# GMRSD Board Of Education

## Home of the Jaguars

### SUPERINTENDENT NEWS

Parents, students, faculty, and community members of Liberty and Independence Township:

Another exciting and eventful school year is fast approaching. As the summer comes to an end, we hope you enjoyed your time away with family and friends and are now preparing for the upcoming year. As always, I encourage you to partner with our staff as a school community. Your input is highly valued and necessary in the progress of your child's education.

Staying consistent with last school year's calendar, we will continue to hold Principal Forums several times throughout the year. In addition, we will also have a Strategic Planning "Look Back" presentation to discuss the present and future endeavors of our school district at our December 2014 public meeting. Another way for you to be a part of our school community is to remain active in your child's daily activities and join parent organizations.

More importantly, we, as a school district, recognize all our parents' support and dedication to our students, and without parent involvement successes would be lost. Join us this year in assisting your child/children supersede their potential.

Sincerely,  
David C. Mango  
Superintendent of Schools

### CURRICULUM CORNER

Hello, I would like to take a minute to introduce myself and tell you a little bit about my background in education. I taught at the high school level for 17 years before I transitioned into administration. I was a special education teacher in both resource center and in-class support settings. I taught algebra and geometry for most of my career in the classroom. Before coming to Hackettstown, I spent two years as the assistant principal for a K-8 school as part of a

shared services agreement. I am entering my third year as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction in Hackettstown and now sharing that role in Great Meadows. During the past two years I have developed a great working relationship with the Great Meadows administrative team and I am looking forward to working with the staff to facilitate the alignment of curriculum and develop new programs utilizing grant monies. Being shared as the curriculum director will also facilitate the professional development and professional learning communities through shared resources.

Nadia Inskeep

### CENTRAL SCHOOL NEWS

Hello. This is Michael Mai, the new Principal of Central School in Independence, part of the Great Meadows Regional School District. I am extremely excited to begin this journey with the staff, students, and parents of Central School. I come to you from Hackettstown Middle School, where I spent the last two years serving as assistant principal. Prior to that, I spent 10 years as an elementary teacher in Hackettstown and Jersey City. These experiences have given me the knowledge and skills I feel will serve me well in guiding the children of Central School into their educational future.

On a personal note, I live in Bangor, Pennsylvania with my wife, Diana, and our two daughters – Abigail, who is 8, and Sarah, who is 4. Having two children that are close in age to the Central School students makes me well aware of the challenges we face as parents and educators at these grade levels. I am motivated to create an atmosphere at Central of which I would want my own children to be a part.

Finally, I am energized to further integrate technology into our students' educational lives. My own children know as much, if not more, about technology than my wife and me. I know we are not alone in this. I hope to use the students' natural curiosity and knack for comprehending technological tools to enhance their.



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education. It not only makes learning fun for the child, but allows teachers to differentiate instruction and reach students more effectively.

Thank you for welcoming me to the Great Meadows family. I look forward to working with everyone.

### LIBERTY SCHOOL NEWS

#### Trimester Grading System / OnCourse Access

In order to provide consistency in grading and home/school communication, starting this year all grade levels at Liberty School will be graded based on a trimester schedule. We feel this gives the students a greater opportunity to show growth and mastery of grade level material and objectives. The ending dates of each trimester are December 2<sup>nd</sup>, March 11<sup>th</sup>, and June 12<sup>th</sup>. We will still have conferences in November and you can always feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher should you have any questions and/or concerns. Also beginning this school year all grade levels will have access to the grade portal for homework assignments and up to date communication of student progress throughout each trimester. All report cards will be generated from the grade portal and reflect a letter grading system (A, B, C, etc.). Work habits and study skills that support learning will also be assessed using a check (expected behavior), check plus (exemplary behavior), and check minus (inappropriate behavior) system. Any area which receives a check minus will be accompanied by a detailed explanation and a request for conference if necessary.

#### Liberty PAC

The Liberty Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) will continue to meet 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 with the Liberty School Principal and Guidance Counselor. In addition to an existing member at each grade level, we will send home notices asking for interest in the open seat. If you would like to be considered for a seat on the Liberty PAC, please send in the form to your child's homeroom

and your name will be entered into the lottery. If you have any ideas or concerns that you feel should be brought up at PAC meeting please contact your existing grade level representative listed below:

#### Third Grade:

Cathleen Winter-Rafalko [catwinter@comcast.com](mailto:catwinter@comcast.com)

#### Fourth Grade:

Gloria Leggio [glody62@gmail.com](mailto:glody62@gmail.com)

#### Fifth Grade:

Vani Sood [vanisood2703@yahoo.com](mailto:vanisood2703@yahoo.com)

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

#### Principal Forums

The Liberty School Principal's Forums for this year will be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, January 13<sup>th</sup>, and April 30<sup>th</sup>. Some of the topics covered will include ongoing information regarding the Journeys English Language Arts program newly adopted this school year, the upcoming PARCC testing for 2015, and our Anti-Bullying, character education program Second Step, which is also brand new to Liberty this school year. If you have any ideas for topics of interest for this year's Principal's Forums please feel free to email them to Mrs. Gesumaria at [kgesumaria@gmrsl.com](mailto:kgesumaria@gmrsl.com).

### MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

Students, parents and guardians, The Great Meadows Middle School staff and I would like to welcome you back to another exciting and challenging school year. We also would like to introduce a few new staff members who will be working with your students: Mrs. Christine Allen will be joining our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math department, Mrs. Mandery will be joining our 7<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts Team, Mrs. Anne Young will be working with our 6<sup>th</sup> graders as an instructional aide and Ms. Gwen Fisher is our new Media Specialist replacing Mrs. O'Connor. Welcome to our school!

August 2014



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I am very pleased to announce that Blended Learning is here! Two classes, one in grade seven and one in grade eight have been set up for a blended learning environment. Students will be using Chromebooks, the internet and traditional materials to receive instruction and complete projects and assignments. This is aligned with our new strategic plan and 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning initiatives. In addition, students in grades six and eight will be using a new math series, Big Ideas. This new series is aligned with the Common Core Standards and incorporates online, interactive resources that assist students in mastering the material. The grade seven series will be coming in the 2015-16 school year.

Please keep watch for a few new clubs coming this year. The tutoring center will be starting in November to assist students struggling academically. Saturday School is coming. The Saturday School program is currently being developed and should be ready to start, also in November. This is another tier of intervention to assist struggling students to meet academic goals. The Gardening Club is also starting and will give students the experience of restoring and maintaining the schools wild-site/garden. This Gardening Club will start early in the year and run intermittently to June, weather permitting.

Finally, please keep the following dates in mind:

Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>- Fall Picture Day

Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>- GMMS Open House/Back to School Night-7pm

Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>- GMMS Principal Forum- 7pm

We look forward to working with you in a very exciting and challenging year. Welcome Back!!!

Mr. Israel Marmolejos

Principal

### Child Study Team

Please welcome the new Child Study Team at Great Meadows Regional School District. Each member will spend three days in their respective buildings with the flexibility to travel to other buildings the other days. We are excited to begin the new school year and hope that if you have not gotten the chance to speak with your individual case manager that you introduce yourself soon.

Team Supervisor Jaime O'Grady has fifteen years of experience supporting children and adults with developmental disabilities and will be housed in the Middle School she oversees three WCSSSD Programs. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work before earning a Master's in Education. Mrs. O'Grady has a well rounded knowledge of various classroom settings ranging from In-class Support to Resource Center to Self-contained Life Skills and even Behavior Disabilities. She completed a second Master's in Administration from Centenary College and is knowledgeable of NJ Special Education Code processes and procedures.

Casandra Weinschenk, School Social Worker, will be located at Central Elementary three days per week. As a case manager and counselor Ms. Weinschenk will be participating in the IEP process, conducting individual counseling sessions, facilitating support groups, as well as taking part in HIB bullying prevention. Ms. Weinschenk a graduate of Kutztown University has been working as a Behavioral Health Counselor in addition to school counselor for the past several years.

Steve Parigi, Learning Consultant (LDT-C), will be located at Liberty Elementary School three days per week. Mr. Parigi is a graduate of Montclair State University. Steve has been working as an LDT-C for several years and is well versed in understanding and implementing appropriate learning techniques for students with special needs.

School Psychologist, Kayla Berger will be located at the Middle School. Ms. Berger honed her skills at Fordham. She uses critical intervention skills to assess and identify levels of risk, and develop plans for student success. Utilizing research-based intervention methods for students with behavioral difficulties and learning disabilities are what make her a successful practitioner.

Great Meadows Regional School District  
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## Dates To Remember

9/01/14 – Closed Labor Day	10/16/14 – Principal Forum (Central Elementary)
9/02/14 – 1 <sup>st</sup> Day for Staff	10/22/14 – Principal Forum (Liberty Elementary)
9/03/14 – 1 <sup>st</sup> Day for Students (Early Dismissal)	10/13/14 – Closed for Students Columbus Day (Teacher Professional Development Day)
9/04/14 – Early Dismissal for Students (Prof. Dev.)	11/06/14 – 11/07/14 – Closed NJEA Convention
9/05/14 – 1 <sup>st</sup> Full Day for Students	11/26/14 – Early Dismissal
9/16/14 – Back To School Night (Liberty Elementary)	11/27/14 – 11/28/14 – Closed Thanksgiving Break
9/17/14 – Back To School Night (GMMS)	12/12/14 – Early Dismissal Students (Teacher Professional Development Day)
9/18/14 – Back To School Night (Central Elementary)	12/23/14 – Early Dismissal
9/25/14 – Back To School Night (Hackettstown High School)	12/24/14 – 12/31/14 – Closed Winter Break
9/30/14 – Hackettstown High School Evening College Fair	01/01/15 – 01/02/15 – Closed
10/09/14 - Principal Forum (GMMS)	01/05/15 – School Reopens