MADISON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mark Schwarz, *Superintendent*

EDUCATION
UPDATE

February 26, 2019

District Updates

Nick Kitsopolous Earns Songwriting Recognition

- MHS Senior **Nick Kitsopolous** was recently featured as an up-and-coming artist by NY Songwriters. The organization holds a monthly performance at the Bitter End in NYC for artists it has recognized, and Nick had the opportunity to perform on January 20th. A link to the NY Songwriters feature on Nick can be found at the following link: http://nysongwriters.com/nick-kits-january-2019/

Madison Improves in the Rankings

- With the release of the 2019 Niche ratings, MPS has jumped 38 spots to be recognized at the 30th best school district in the state. The annual ranking, driven largely by survey results, measures schools on a variety of factors, including Academics, Diversity, Teachers, College Prep, Clubs & Activities, Health & Safety, Administration, Sports, Food, and Resources & Facilities. A Patch article about the rankings can be found at the following link: https://goo.gl/cEaMkd.

MHS Photography Club Shoots for the Website

- Under the guidance of adviser **MaryAnn St. Jacques**, the MHS Photography club photographed our schools for our new website. Special thank you to **Jessie Kessler**, **Jade Heenehan**, **Danielle Cenicola**, **Jordyn Sterkel**, **Eva Gaurin**, **Sara Taddeo**.

February 19th Professional Development

- Staff experienced a wide range of PD, some of which is outlined in sections below. Among the highlights include a variety of programs related to social/emotional learning, including trainings on suicide prevention and awareness, de-escalation, the Nurtured Heart Approach (https://goo.gl/N5w7DF), student motivation, stress reduction through mindfulness, and equity. Special thanks to all the presenters and those who facilitated trainings!

Teacher-Leadership Updates

- K-12 STEAM Coordinator (**Jason Erdreich**, MJS)
  - Jason hosted a number of visits to district STEM spaces and is putting the finishing touches on plans for the summer STEAM Academy. He has also taken the lead on budgeting for the newly-named Technology, Engineering, and Design (TED) department for grades K-12.
- K-12 Science Coordinator (**Carolyn Lieu**, MHS)
  - Carolyn led a workshop during the February 19th PD day for district Physical Education teachers and Media Specialists to create lessons that incorporate the elementary gardens. Her leadership in this area has provided a structured approach for the gardens as planting season nears.
- Elementary Instructional Coaches (**Shelly Emann** and **Kathleen Wallace**)
  - Shelly and Kathleen continue to work with staff in each building and have been planning for next year through discussions about materials, pedagogical approaches, and assessment. Both were also involved in leading professional development during the February 19th PD day.
- MPS Teaching and Learning Framework (TLF)
  - Staff and administration continue to make progress as round 2 of the observation cycle comes to an end. The TLF has helped drive professional development on building a culture of learning and on student motivation at all levels.
- NJ Teacher Leader Network (NJTLN)
  - The NJTLN meeting has been moved to March due to inclement weather and the NJDOE will report on the new assessment being developed for teachers interested in the new "Teacher Leader" endorsement.

School Updates

Madison High School

- Technology teacher **Jeff Coviello** has organized the first annual New Jersey TV & Video Educator Convocation. Area TV & Video teachers will participate in breakout sessions related to the content and host guest speaker Tom Rondinella, who is an assistant dean at the College of Communications at Seton Hall University. The event is being rescheduled after a cancelation due to inclement weather.
- The February edition of the Student Council Shout Out can be found here: https://goo.gl/66rLcS.
- Madison High School's second annual Sleep Out in support of the Covenant House will be held on March 29th.
- On February 8th, MHS recognized its Staff & Students of the 2nd Marking Period with a breakfast in the Media Center. The honorees for February are:
    - Staff Members: **Rich Vasquez** (Special Education), **Monica Cleary** (English)
    - 9th Grade: **Matthias Hendrickson**, **Mia Melchior**
    - 10th Grade: **Abigail Mah**, **Halle Schnackenberg**, **Emily Tracy**, **Madeleine Yashar**
    - 11th Grade: **Cemile Atar**, **Delaney Lloyd**, **Christopher Walsh**
    - 12th Grade: **Chase Dreitlein**, **Brendan Quinn**, **Samantha Sullivan**
- MHS Guidance
    - On January 28th, the Guidance Department sponsored a Financial Aid Night delivered in Spanish. Over 50 people attended from a variety of high schools in the area.
    - The 10th Grade Information Night is scheduled for February 27th.
    - On February 9th, MHS 10th and 11th grade students had the opportunity to take a free practice ACT or free practice SAT. Approximately 100 students attended.
    - College applications are rolling in. Below are some colleges that the class of 2019 have been accepted to:
        - Boston College
        - Drexel University
        - Duke University
        - Elon University
        - Haverford College
        - Kean University
        - Lafayette College
        - Northeastern University
        - Reed College
        - Spelman College
        - Stony Brook University
        - Wesleyan University

Madison Junior School

- Alice Keeler returned on February 5th to work with teachers in small groups on topics ranging from maximizing student learning to giving students effective feedback.
- In Advisory, students were given an opportunity to provide input for the Mural Project. Students sketched out ideas that showed what they think MJS represents.
- Peer Leaders raised over $100 during their Valentine's Day fundraiser to help the Make a Wish Foundation
- **Zoe Bohensky** was honored as February Music Student of the Month by the Mayo Performing Arts Center. Below is the recommendation from Orchestra teacher **Kathleen McCormick**:
    - *Zoe has been a violinist in my orchestra since 6th grade where she has consistently performed, is respectful of her teacher and peers and is someone who always gives her best effort. Last year she began rising to the top of the curve in her performance evaluations, the result of her independent practice at home as she does not receive private lessons. She earned principal positions within her sections and was recommended to take summer instruction to continue her rapid progress. This year, she has earned membership into my 8th grade honors octet which is a featured performing group for our concerts, graduation and community events. I am very proud of Zoe's progress as a musician at the Madison Junior School and happy to give her the opportunity to be Music Student of the Month as my Outstanding Orchestra member.*

Central Avenue School

- On Valentine's Day, the school had many celebrations and creative ways to show gratitude for students. Additionally, *Look for the Good* Peer Leaders created Valentines for younger students and Brent Daniels ran an assembly on the creation of music.
- The *Me and My Guy Dance* is scheduled for February 22nd.
- CAS celebrated the 100th day of school!
- The STEM Fair is being held on March 28th. Over 150 projects are already planned in grades 3-5.
- CAS is planning for *Read Across America* and the Media Specialist planned a Box Float and Potato Head Book Character Contest as well as other events.
- On February 19th, Principal **Tom Liss** and Counselor **Mike Shugrue** led PD on student motivation.

Kings Road School

- The teachers and students celebrated the 100th day of school by completing fun activities and dressing up.
- The *One School, One Book* assembly and book unveiling occurred on February 21st.
- The STEAM Fair is planned for March 27th, with student projects created through the leadership of teacher **Jason Knevals**.
- ESL teacher Kerry Stockdale is planning the first ever KRS International Day. Volunteer KRS parents and their children are scheduled to present to classes about their cultures on March 20th.
- On February 19th, teachers engaged in a PD activity entitled "Where's My Story?" to examine equity in character and author representation in the literature present in the school. Teachers examined the books in their classrooms and in the bookroom through an equity lens to answer the question, "Are the books in our libraries reflecting the lives of ALL of our students?" The teachers also viewed a great video that can be found at https://youtu.be/wbBKgoDP-oY.
- The teachers also convened in their Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) to review SMART goals and common assessment data during the PD day.
- Selected 4th grade students will complete the NAEP assessment on February 28th.
- STEAM educator **Jason Knevals** is preparing to present on the school's "green" initiatives with students at the Green Vision Forum on March 14th at Drew University.
- Staff reviewed materials from Second Step, the school's new character education program, during a faculty meeting. Counselor **Erica Tavaglione** received a grant for the program through the MEF and will soon begin teaching guided lessons to the students. The program is rooted in social-emotional learning (SEL) and "helps transform schools into supportive, successful learning environments uniquely equipped to encourage children to thrive." More information can be found at https://www.secondstep.org/.

Torey J. Sabatini

- Teachers participated in a variety of professional development on February 19th including STAR custom reports, NJSLA writing assessments, integration of the learning garden in special areas, and analysis of phonics instruction in grades K-2.
- Author Matt de la Pena will be visiting TJS on March 11th. Matt is the 2016 winner of the prestigious Newbery Award for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children and is a #1 New York Times best-selling author. The author's information can be found at http://mattdelapena.com.
- On March 11th, the PTO will be hosting "A Night Under the Stars," during which members of the Pearl Observatory will visit TJS to teach about space. Several telescopes will be set up outside on the TJS field and a pop-up planetarium will be created in the Jaguar Jungle.
- The annual *Read Across America* celebration will be held from March 4-8.
- The annual TJS musical, "The Little Mermaid", will debut on March 8th.
- The TJS Curriculum Night will be held on March 13th.

Academic Department Updates

Humanities

- A Gilder Lehrman Teaching Literacy Through History Seminar was held on February 25th. The seminar on Women's Suffrage was led by Carol Berkin, a scholar with notable publications and appearances on PBS and History Channel documentaries. Dr. Berkin focuses on women's history and colonial America. Thanks again to the Kirby Foundation and Gilder Lehrman for making arrangements for this professional experience.
- Humanities staff members participated in a number of excellent workshops on February 19th, such as work on PARCC Writing Tasks for teachers in grades 3-5, Sight Words and Fundations for staff in grades K-2), Vocabulary.com Planning for MJS and MHS teachers, and writing common unit assessments for MHS Social Studies staff.

Technology, Engineering, and Design

- On February 5th, Livingston teachers and former board member Jim Novotny toured both MJS and MHS. Lodi High School staff also returned to MJS with their administration to follow up from their previous tour prior to the break.
- The Madison Public Library will hold MakerDay on March 23rd. Representatives from the district promoted programs at the event last year and it was a huge success.
- MJS will be hosting a Family Maker Night on March 28th.

Visual and Performing Arts

- Auditions are being held this month for the always popular *Dessert and Jazz*. D&J takes place on March 30th and celebrates student performers and amazing cakes.
- The MJS musical *Secret Garden* runs March 1st and 2nd and the MHS musical *Bright Star* runs March 14th through the 16th.
- MHS student **Sophie Newlin**, under the guidance of teacher **MaryAnn St. Jacques**, won a Pingry Art Award in the Pingry Hostetter Gallery Student Photo Exhibition. Only 5 awards were given in a field of over 300 entries.

World Language

- On February 28th, the World Language Department will be holding its *International Gala* in the cafeteria. Over 400 students are expected to participate! Food from a wide variety of cultures will be represented and 13 acts will perform musical numbers in a foreign language. Prior to the gala, approximately 50 students will be inducted into the World Language National Honor Society during a ceremony in the MHS media center.
- On February 19th, K-12 World Language teachers attended a workshop on creating and implementing integrated performance assessments led by Nathan Lutz of the Foreign Language Educators of NJ.