School Safety & Security Remains A Top Priority

Excerpts from a February 19, 2018 blog post at https://drgreenenewton.blogspot.com/ are included in this article.

It has taken some time to process the horrific events that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Whether it is a concert in Las Vegas, a church in Charleston, a nightclub in Orlando, a movie theater in Aurora, or one of dozens of schools throughout our great country, we continue to be reminded that we can never stop being vigilant in protecting our fellow citizens, especially our children. The safety and security of our schools and children remain a top priority for the Newton Public Schools!

We believe our safety and security is heightened by living our core values. Our mission states, in part: “We believe in the value of care. Therefore, we put trust, respect, and support at the heart of our school culture, and safety, security, and sustainability at the center of our physical environment”. What is clear to us is how important our school culture is to a safe, secure physical environment. We practice these values every day in all aspects of our school program. We encourage our students and staff to report any suspicious or unusual behavior, whether observed in person or online. We take all threats seriously and act accordingly.

(Continued on page 5)
Each year, the Sussex County Counselors Association recognizes students who exhibit the highest degrees of care, concern and selflessness among their peers. These attributes are routinely demonstrated through the selected students’ interactions, not only within their schools, but throughout their communities. The Caring Award is earned by those who continually show respect toward others, compassion for all, and commitment to a cause. This year's award acknowledged the generosity and continued kindness of Halsted's 8th grade student, Aubrey Carroll.

As Guidance Counselor Mr. Boyle explained, “Aubrey is a critical piece of the fabric of Halsted. She is recognized and revered by her classmates for her continued willingness to help and her unfaltering optimism despite challenges that may arise. She is looked upon by her teachers as an individual of noble character who serves as a role model to her peers. Aubrey arrives each day ready to listen with an open mind and heart, shows that she is prepared to learn, remains respectful of others at all times, demonstrates appropriate responsibility, and takes great pride in all that she does”.

She is a member of Symphonic Band, Student Council, Best Buds, as well as a number of athletic teams where she represents not only Halsted, but the community of Newton with pride and dignity. The Aubrey that is visible to the world with her bright smile and outgoing personality reflects the inner beauty of her soul. Her reaction upon hearing that she was selected as the 2018 Caring Award Recipient mirrors this truth as she explained, “it feels weird to receive an award for doing what everyone should do.”
Superintendent’s Roundtable
Student of the Year
2017-18

Richard Reczka was chosen as the 2018 Student of the Year because, as Karen Mazur, Director of Guidance puts it, “he is positive, passionate, helpful, dedicated and friendly. Richie embodies the very essence of TRS (Trust, Respect and Support) and is an absolute stand-out in this community. Richie is the first person a staff member will seek out if they need a mature, responsible leader. He clearly understands himself as a member of this community; even with all of his personal and academic gifts, he does not perceive himself as being above anyone else. In short, he is a pretty amazing young man.”

Jeff Waldron, Principal of Newton High School and Theresa Hough, Guidance Counselor with Richard Reczka

Halsted Middle School Peer Mentors Make an Impact

As students travel through their educational journeys, the need for increased independence coupled with the ability to contribute through collaboration become integral to success. In an active effort to further assist students with understanding and demonstrating the importance of specific life skills, a peer mentoring group has been created at Halsted. This program provides opportunities for 6th and 7th graders to demonstrate interdependence while fostering a higher level of self-reliance. Ms. Desautels assists the students in targeting skills related to time management, organization, and accountability. The peer mentors work one-on-one with group members to refine these skills and often provide homework assistance to those in need, while remaining members work to target individual growth in relation to a number of grade-level skills across content areas. Although still in its infancy, the impact of this program is apparent among students and staff.

Newton High School’s
1st Annual Chili Cookoff

The NHS School Climate Team held its first annual Staff Chili Cookoff Contest on Jan 15th. Eleven staff members participated. Mr. Choma won for Hottest Chili, Mrs. LaForge won for Best Name and Ms. Meisinger won for Most Flavorful. Thank you to all the participants and staff supporters of this event. Congratulations to all the winners.
Proposed budget DECREASES taxes for the 2018-19 school year

It’s school budget time in New Jersey! The Newton Board of Education has been working hard to continue providing a strong educational program for our 1,535 students in an efficient manner that takes the needs of our taxpayers and sending districts into consideration. This was a very difficult budget year. In spite of many efforts by the board and administration, the issue of fair state aid funding was not resolved by the state government in time to have an impact on the 2017-18 budget process. However, in July, the state budget increased state aid to the Newton Board of Education. While the Board of Education had other options, All $221,748 was used to reduce the tax levy! Since tax bills had not yet been issued, taxpayers may not have been aware of the Board of Education’s efforts to reduce the tax impact. Perhaps the best news for taxpayers is that the district received an additional $301,009 in state aid for the 2018-19 budget. While this still falls short of the full fair funding that the district is seeking from the state, it is a move in the right direction. To add to that news, the district’s proposed budget assigns all of that revenue towards tax reduction, creating a DECREASE of $14.55 per $100,000 of assessed property value. This budget does increase spending on instruction by nearly 2%, bringing it up to 60% of the total operating budget, which is considered best practice. To enhance instructional technology, $53,590 is allocated to continue our 1:1 learning device initiative at Newton High School for incoming freshmen. Tax decreases lead to difficult decisions, so budget cuts needed to be made. Two part-time teacher assistant positions will be eliminated and one assistant will be moved from the library to a special education assignment. Additional personnel reductions include: three building coordinator positions (one from each school), four teaching positions (one from each school plus the high school special education position that could not be filled this year), one custodial position, and one administrative assistant (retirement that was filled with a transfer). Facility projects identified by the Board of Education and administration are included in the budget ($422,500) and funded by capital reserve. In addition to infrastructure repair and building efficiency, these projects also address security; upgrades to the Halsted and Merrim Avenue camera systems are planned, and new handheld devices and repeaters will improve connectivity with the police.

### GENERAL FUND

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Expense</td>
<td>26,982,649</td>
<td>$26,584,267</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>459,914</td>
<td>$639,035</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charter Schools</td>
<td>162,909</td>
<td>$88,674</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Operating Budget</strong></td>
<td>27,605,472</td>
<td>$27,311,976</td>
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### REVENUES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budgeted Fund Balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Reserve</td>
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<td>SEMI (Medicaid)</td>
<td>41,355</td>
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<td>Tuition</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>Extraordinary Aid</td>
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<td>State Aid</td>
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<td>Tax Levy</td>
<td>12,357,185</td>
<td>$12,879,942</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUES</strong></td>
<td>27,605,472</td>
<td>$27,311,976</td>
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### EXPENDITURES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
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<td>Support Services</td>
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<td>Employee Benefits/Taxes</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Operations/Maintenance</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>459,914</td>
<td>$639,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter School</td>
<td>162,909</td>
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As evidence of our TRS culture, students at Halsted Middle School and Newton High School demonstrated their support for the victims in the Parkland, Florida tragedy through thoughtful demonstrations on March 14, 2018. They made sure their voices were heard and have taken a prominent role along with parents and staff members in suggesting additional security enhancements.

Our district and school safety teams continue to put significant time, thought, and resources into hardening our facilities and sharpening our procedures. Our school security monitors are key point people in having eyes and ears open to potential issues. The Newton Police participate frequently in our security drills and have access to live streaming video in the event of a critical incident to which they would be on site in a matter of minutes.

We have three current security initiatives about which you should be aware:

- Through a grant received by the Sussex County Prosecutor’s Office, we have worked with a company to produce Critical Response Graphic Maps of each of our schools. These maps allow emergency responders to have accurate, easy-to-understand location data in the event of a critical incident. This information has also been provided to our school safety teams.

- Our 2018-19 budget (see details inside) includes enhanced radio devices and antenna repeaters that will allow us to have direct contact with the Newton Police in the event of any emergency. We are also budgeting for additional cameras with motion-based zoom and greater storage capacity.

- Parent unification drills are being planned for this spring. They will be limited in scope and minimally disruptive, yet provide us the opportunity to practice this important task should it ever be necessary.

Our mission also states: We believe parents, teachers, support staff, and citizens must partner in order to help children achieve their highest potential. Therefore, we organize ourselves as community schools to ensure we allocate sufficient resources to the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our students as well as to their academic achievement. To our parents, grandparents, and other significant adults in the community: you can help us by becoming aware of signs and symptoms of violence as published by the American Psychological Association in its guide to Warning Signs of Youth Violence at http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/warning-signs.aspx.

Anyone can report security concerns directly to Dr. Greene by phone at 973-383-7392 or by email at kgreene@newtonnj.org. Concerns can also be reported to the Newton Police by phone at 973-383-2525 or online at http://newtonpolice.org/crime-tips/. To report any crime in progress, please call 9-1-1 immediately!
Community Schools Update

- Merriam Avenue School has successfully incorporated an additional preschool section into their growing program. School leaders are looking to work with other area providers to see how we can continue moving toward universal preschool for all eligible Newton children.

- Halsted Middle School is hosting mental and behavioral health services through two providers: Youth Advocacy Programs, a Morris County nonprofit, and Sussex County’s Youth Services Commission, a program in the Department of Health and Human Services.

- Newton High School is engaging in discussions with Pass It Along to host mental and behavioral health services through their clinical professionals. School leaders are also working on a more formal partnership with Pass It Along to further promote self-discovery, leadership, and volunteering.

- Our Design Team of community partners reviewed needs assessment data from the United Way, Center for Prevention and Counseling, Norwescap, Project Self Sufficiency, and our own district surveys.

- Dr. Greene testified recently before the NJ Legislature’s Joint Committee on the Public Schools on community schools in support of a bill that would fund a pilot program to provide technical assistance and a site coordinator to up to 50 districts who are establishing community schools.

- The district has submitted a federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant application for the successor program to Project Launch, our highly successful afterschool program led by Project Self-Sufficiency over the past five years. If approved, the program will become known as Choose 2 Connect, and it will be linked directly to our community schools efforts. The following local organizations have agreed to collaborate/partner with us on Choose 2 Connect:
  - Center for Prevention & Counseling
  - DreamGirls Initiative
  - Greater Newton Chamber of Commerce
  - Newton Medical Center
  - Pass It Along
  - Project Self-Sufficiency
  - Sojihuggles Children’s Foundation
  - Sussex County 4-H
  - Sussex County Department of Health & Human Services
  - ThorLabs
  - Town of Newton
  - United Way of Northern NJ
  - YMCA of Sussex County
  - YMCA of Sussex County
Educators of the Year
2017-18

MERRIAM AVENUE SCHOOL

Jane Langeveld
Educational Services
Professional of the Year

NEWTON HIGH SCHOOL

Lisa Casamassina
Educational Services
Professional of the Year

HALSTED MIDDLE SCHOOL

Carolyn McKnight
Educational Services
Professional of the Year

CONGRATULATIONS

Noah Sharp and Kayleigh Furth, shown above with Coach and Teacher Michael Bussow, competed alongside Team USA in Manhattan at the Dr. Sander Invitational Track Meet and both set school indoor records in the 300 meter dash this season at 41.40 and 34.64 seconds. Kayleigh placed 6th and Noah finished 9th, qualifying for Nationals. Kayleigh and Noah are two of Newton High's top sprinters. Both are seniors and school record holders in the 200 meter, 300 meter, 400 meter and 600 yard distances and are both national qualifiers for the 200 meter dash.

Newton FFA members attended a field trip to Longwood Gardens. Although the students have seen and learned about most of the flowers in their Floral Design class, they were able to observe many flowers in their preferred ideal growth environment.
As technology increases and emerging demands change, administrators, teachers, parents and community members seek new and innovative ways to not only meet students where they are, but to enable them to get where they need to be in the future. Living in the 21st Century, this is more of a priority than ever as essential elements for success are not the same as they used to be. Halsted Middle School actively addresses these needs in a new course taught by Ms. Fisher that infuses career ready practices with the art of mindfulness. As a new edition to the Specials rotation at Halsted, this course focuses on practices that have been linked to increased college, career, and life success, while engaging executive functions in relation to self-control, emotional well being, problem-solving and collaboration. It serves as the core of Halsted’s character education instruction and has been well received as a needed addition to the existing range of courses by students and staff alike.