

The Curriculum Corner

North Brunswick Township Schools Monthly Curricular Update



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Partnerships with NBTSCHOOLS

The purpose of school and community partnerships is to enhance the district's mission of providing educational and collaborative benefits to students, teachers, and the entire community. Here in North Brunswick Township Schools, we have special partnerships with numerous organizations within our community. Our collaborations include activities for student growth and achievement, curriculum and instructional development, as well as, student and teacher learning communities. This issue of the the Curriculum Corner is to highlight some of the many partnerships and raise awareness for the many organizations that share services with us.



Rutgers Graduate School of Education

NBTSchools and Rutgers University have entered into an exciting partnership that will enhance teacher education in our community. Many graduate students at the School of Education will now complete their field observation experiences in North Brunswick schools. At the same time, Rutgers professors will offer classes on teaching methods in our buildings, allowing teacher education students to learn in real time as they see instruction unfold. Our administrators also meet with the teacher education students to help them understand instructional practices, school policy and trends in education. For the Rutgers students selected to complete their student teaching in North Brunswick, this allows them to enter our schools with sound knowledge of both our students and our instructional beliefs. In turn, our students receive high quality instruction and our district establishes a relationship with many talented new teachers, who

may seek to apply for positions within our district upon graduation.

**CNJ PEMA
in NORTH**



BRUNSWICK

Our district is a founding partner district of the Central New Jersey Partnership to Enhance Math Achievement (CNJ PEMA). CNJ PEMA is an "Education Math/Science Partnership (Ed MSP)" funded by grants from the US Department of Education through the NJ Department of Education to Rutgers University. Each year, CNJ PEMA provides professional development to teachers which focuses on integrating mathematics content and effective mathematical pedagogy at the upper primary level. An intensive Summer Institute on the Rutgers campus was followed by a full school year of required webinars and in-district mentoring with occasional voluntary on-campus face-to-face meetings. Teachers who participate in PEMA show a significant improvement in mathematical knowledge. The effects of PEMA extend beyond the cadre of teachers participating in PEMA because those participants share materials and content with their grade-level teams and with fellow teachers.

Catholic Charities and Community Church

Parsons Elementary School has had a partnership with Catholic Charities for three years. Once a month, volunteers provide an opportunity for parents and their children to bond. Phones are put down for an evening to enjoy arts and crafts, a movie and games. Catholic Charities hopes parents take this opportunity to engage with their children and that children engage with their peers in an environment that promotes interaction and the sharing of knowledge in a fun and enjoyable fashion. In

wonderful ways. Their weekly endeavors lend a helping hand to students and parents with volunteers from the community. Three different programs run every Tuesday evening from 6:30-8pm: English as a Second Language (ESL) for Adults, childcare for infants whose parents are involved in the ESL program, and "Homework Help" for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

NJDOE- Connected Action Roadmap Partnership



Livingston Park School is currently participating in a pilot partnership with the Department of Education called the "CAR" program. Connected Action Roadmap program (CAR) is a blended online module of resources for teacher professional development. Research shows that teachers working together in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to collaboratively plan, look at student data, and share best practices, is one of the best ways to improve student learning. The CAR model is designed to support and help strengthen teacher PLCs by providing them with tools and resources to elevate their practice together.

LMS and RIISA

For the past several years, Linwood has partnered with the Rutgers Institute for Improving Student Achievement (RIISA). RIISA provides wonderful professional development sessions for their partner schools. This year, our work centers upon culturally responsive pedagogy, or the ability to develop the skills and knowledge for our staff to be able to work successfully in cross cultural situations. We have explored topics such as student engagement, curriculum, and new instructional techniques and resources.

addition, Point Community Church has enhanced the Parsons Community in

George St Playhouse



This year, Linwood's 6th grade Language Arts teachers have entered into an exciting partnership with the George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick. With the help of the playhouse, our teachers have been learning how to integrate theatrical techniques into their instruction. This partnership has offered our students a new, fun way to experience and understand challenging texts while also cultivating a love of the arts. Staff from Linwood and the Playhouse have worked together to select texts, plan lessons, and team teach the content. Students and staff alike have greatly enjoyed this experience, and we are excited for our work to continue.

Central NJ Family Health Consortium

Linwood Middle School partners with the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium to offer the Teen Outreach Program (TOP). TOP is a nationally recognized program designed to promote positive growth and development of adolescents through a combination of curriculum guided group discussions and community service learning. The programs help students learn important skills, including goal setting, decision making, and forming healthy relationships. Students in the TOP program meet weekly with a facilitator from CJFHC during their R&R period. Their R&R teacher is also a trained facilitator. Both the 6th and 8th grade groups will begin their community service projects shortly.

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital - Safety Ambassador Program



For several years, North Brunswick Township schools has worked in partnership with Robert Wood Johnson Hospital's Safety Ambassador

prevention and related safety strategies. These high school leaders then educate 1st or 2nd graders in their district about these topics in an effort to increase safe behaviors and decrease traumatic injuries. RWJ Hospital provides training for 10 high school "Youth Ambassadors." They are provided with a clear charge, to help children stay safe. American Red Cross Club students give 40 minute presentations to 2nd grade students in different elementary schools and overall, 4 areas of safety are taught: fall safety, pedestrian safety, car safety and wheeled safety. This program provides opportunities for improving presentation skills, leadership development, and promoting teamwork.

Waksman Student Scholars

North Brunswick Township High School partners with Rutgers University and the Waksman Student Scholars Program. Under the leadership of Dr. Lucille O'Reilly, thirteen NBTHS students are conducting authentic research in bioinformatics and molecular biology. Each year the performance of NBTHS is evaluated and we are asked to return and participate in the program. The program starts each academic year with a summer institute for teachers and a currently enrolled Waksman student. The 2015-2016 WSSP project focuses on *Landoltia punctata*, a freshwater duckweed plant, and its DNA sequence analysis of genes. This particular species is of specific interest to the community through its use in bioremediation and potential for being treated as a biofuel.

NBTHS and CBAL

The NBTHS math department has been in partnership with ETS since 2010 working on an initiative called Cognitive Based Assessment of, for, and as Learning (CBAL). Algebra I students participate in a series of computer based explorations and tasks that incorporate the Standards for Mathematical Practice as well as content fluencies. Special emphasis is placed on justification, reasoning and modeling. By evaluating students' responses, teachers and researchers gain a better understanding of how assessment can be used as tool for learning and gain evidence of students' mathematical thinking. The goal is to evaluate student understanding of mathematical knowledge and skills in ways that effectively support teaching and

NBTHS and Empower

Beginning with the the 2015-2016 school year, The EMPOWER program, based at the New Brunswick Center of MiddlesexCounty College, has expanded its reach to include NBTHS students. EMPOWER targets Hispanic students who have a desire to pursue higher level education upon graduation from high school, but are currently struggling in their studies. The program meets 3 times a week when the college is in session and includes academic support through tutoring provided by students from Middlesex County College and Rutgers University, as well as presentations and trips designed to prepare EMPOWER students for college. Last year of the nine NBTHS students who applied for EMPOWER, five were admitted and are currently attending. Recently EMPOWER has announced another expansion to the program, specifically the inclusion of Hispanic students who plan to attend MCC in September of 2016 to provide a "bridge" program to prepare them to be successful college students. A number of NBTHS students applied for this program, and we look forward to hearing if they were admitted at the February 4 MCC New Brunswick Center Advisory Board meeting!

Assessment Updates

PARCC 2016 Parent Night

On February 4th, North Brunswick Township Public Schools hosted its annual PARCC Parent Night. The presentation included a preview of the upcoming PARCC administration scheduled for this Spring, as well as a review of the 2015 testing administration. Parents/guardians can view the presentation on the main page of the district website found [here](#).

PARCC 2016 Testing Schedule

Parents/guardians can easily access the 2016 PARCC Testing Schedule by visiting our district website or clicking on this [link](#). For more information about PARCC, including practice items, please utilize the PARCC &

Program on childhood safety. The Safety Ambassador Program teaches NBTHS students about injury

learning. The project provides our students with additional experience with next generation assessments.

Standardized Testing link on our district website as well as our NBTSchools Common Core & PARCC Parent Resource website found [here](#).