



MANVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Family and Community Update – October / November, 2014

Greetings to All of Our Families and Friends of the Manville Public School District!
We have many exciting things happening in our schools and are very proud to share them with you in this October/November Update for the Manville Public School District. Here are some of the highlights:

Progress on ACHIEVE 3000 Grant: As I mentioned in our last update to the community, our district was awarded the Gregory Olson Educational Technology Grant in the amount of \$58,015 back in late August. This grant has provided the district with licenses and 24/7 access for all students Grades 2-12 to the ACHIEVE 3000 Digital Platform for improving Literacy Instruction. At this writing, our students have now been introduced to the ACHIEVE 3000 system and have been assessed for their current Lexile (Reading Level). Manville Teaching staff also met in grade level teams on the afternoon of November 4th in order to delve further into the new on-line Literacy Platform. Teachers custom-designed calendars of topical reading for their students at all grade levels and matched current event articles in the system to curricular themes and standards. Our goal is to provide steady, consistent, research-based reading and writing practice to all Manville students across the curriculum in Grades 2-12.

Extending Literacy Opportunities – Strengthening the Partnership between Manville Public Schools and Manville Public Library: In partnership with Nannette Peterson, new Director of the Manville Public Library, I am pleased to announce that our district is in the process of exploring ways to connect the Public Library more closely to our Public Schools. We want to “get the word out” to the community at large that Somerset County has invested grant money into the local Public Library in order to update its floor plan, book collection, and available technology. Ms. Peterson will be addressing the Leadership Team of the Manville Public Schools on December 3rd and is scheduled to meet with Media Specialists District-Wide on December 8th. Stay tuned for upcoming information regarding this strong alliance!

Authentic Technology in Manville Classrooms – 2014 Participation in The Hour of Code: We live in a world surrounded by technology. We know that whatever field our students choose to go into as adults, their ability to succeed will increasingly hinge on

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understanding how technology works. Unfortunately, research shows that only a fraction of college students are opting for majors in computer science currently and enrollment in this major is down from just a decade ago. That's why many Manville Classrooms are opting to participate in the largest learning event in history: **The Hour of Code**, during *Computer Science Education Week (Dec. 8-14)*. For more information on this unique event, go to: <http://hourofcode.com/us>

Thank you for your generosity: As you know, our district suffered a heart-breaking loss back in September when Weston Second Grade Student Jorge Flores Jr. and his father, Jorge Flores Sr. were tragically killed in an automobile accident. All four of our PTA organizations came together at that time to raise funds to assist surviving family members. The Manville Community truly “stepped up to the plate” raising a total of \$5,382.62. The Disbursement of Funds in this effort is as follows:

- \$4,100.00: Bergen Funeral Services for all costs associated with funeral, wake and transport;
- \$565.80: Airfare for Jorge's family to return to their native Puerto Rico for burial;
- \$100.00: Car service to Newark Airport for Flores/Ruiz surviving family members;
- **Balance: \$616.82**

After much discussion regarding the balance of funds, our PTA Executive Board Members from Weston School, Roosevelt School, ABIS, and MHS, along with Weston Principal, Mr. Nicolas Diaz, made the decision to purchase a special “buddy bench” for the playground at Weston Elementary School.

A “buddy bench” is a special place where young students who need or want a friend during recess can go to sit. *Students would be taught that when they see a classmate sitting on the “buddy bench”, they should know that their peer is looking for a friend or playmate on the playground.*

The “buddy bench” promotes a positive climate at the elementary level and teaches children to speak up when they are feeling lonely and in need of a friend. The Weston “buddy bench” would be dedicated to Jorge's memory, and we believe it to be a fitting tribute to a little boy who loved his school and his time on the Weston playground very much.

Manville Students Shine! We are so very proud of all of our wonderful students K-12 in Manville! Here are some exciting updates in tribute to our students:

- **WAL-MART Grand Re-opening:** Our High School Band did a fine job earlier this month when they performed at the grand Re-Opening of the Manville Wal-Mart. The event was covered by the Manville News. Special thanks to Board

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Member Mr. Panfile and for Band Director Mr. Ken Zampella for joining me at 6:30 AM to encourage our students in their outstanding performance.

- **Cross Country:** Mr. David Giantisco (MHS English Teacher) has been awarded the Skyland Conference's Boys' Coach of the Year Award for Cross-Country. We are extremely proud and grateful to Mr. Giantisco for his remarkable efforts with our students.
- The following Manville High School cross-country runners have been selected for the Skyland Conference Cross-Country Teams:
 - Skyland Conference Cross-Country First Team - Girls: Gloria Yakobchuk
 - Skyland Conference Cross-Country Second Team - Girls: Kate Bowden; Jenna Molesko; Sarah Michitsch
 - Skyland Conference Cross-Country Second Team - Boys: Frank Arevalo; Erik Warren; Stephan Nash

Sincere Congratulations to these athletes of distinction!

- **Manville Football:** The Mustangs played their final football game of the year facing off against the Keansburg High School Titans on Saturday, November 15th. After a wide lead in the first two quarters of the game, the Titans began closing the gap in the 3rd quarter. Our excellent coaching staff continually encouraged our boys until the lead was solidified in the 4th quarter. Manville Mustangs won, 41-32. Special thanks to Head Coach Pat Gorbatuk and to all of our coaches and volunteers for their tremendous efforts and dedication to our boys throughout the entire football season.
- **NJ Forensics League 2ND Annual MUSTANG Classic Tournament at MHS:** Our ladies and gentlemen of Manville High School, under the direction of Manville Teacher Mr. Michael Forte, participated in a day of debate against more than 450 high school students state-wide on November 15, 2014. Manville High School hosted this prestigious event raising more than \$5,000 to benefit MHS. Our students performed at a very high level and are to be commended for their logical and carefully worded efforts. It should be noted that this event ran for the first time just four years ago with only one Manville Student participating. We have grown substantially since that time and are delighted with the progress our students have made under Mr. Forte's careful direction.

Election Day Results, 2014: We are pleased to announce the re-election of dedicated Board Members Ms. Heidi Alles and Mrs. Jeanne Lombardino to the Manville Board of Education on November 4, 2014. We would also like to welcome newly-elected Board Member Mr. Branden Agen to the Board, effective January 2015. We extend our sincere gratitude to Mrs. Valerie Frank for her years of service to the Manville Board of Education.

A Final Note: As I travel to all of the buildings in the district, I am struck by the many essays and artworks that our students have created as we prepare for Thanksgiving this coming Thursday. A simple phrase that I noticed in passing this morning stated: Thankful today; Thankful Tomorrow; Thankful Always...

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I couldn't agree more.

Wishing all of our Manville families and friends a safe and enjoyable holiday weekend.
Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Sincerely,

Anne Facendo

*Anne R. Facendo, Superintendent
Manville Public Schools*