

# CHERRY HILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## CHPS Weekly

District News for the week of February 13, 2015

## What's New in Our Science Curriculum

It's "Science Fair Season" here in the Cherry Hill Public Schools – the perfect time to talk about the new and exciting elements that have been added to our curriculum.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Snow Make-Up Day**  
February 16

**5th Grade  
Information Nights**  
Beck

In the coming weeks, many of our schools will be rolling out their Science Fairs – some during the school day and some in the evenings. Students' and teachers' enthusiasm for these events is contagious and we owe this excitement to what has been happening in our classrooms from grades K-12.

Our shift in instruction during the last year has focused on student inquiry, investigation and products at the middle school level. This means students are encouraged to ask questions and raise curiosity during the science learning process. They are then guided in hands-on work to find out why and how scientific events take place. In the final step of the learning process, they develop the “product” – the tangible result of what they've learned – while incorporating engineering into the process. This process is clearly demonstrated in our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) curriculum. We periodically highlight our schools' STEM work on the District web site. Please see the story below (left) for a specific example of a STEM project.

Our secondary teachers participate in ongoing professional development to help generate new ideas for implementing the science curriculum, which aligns with the [Next Generation Science Standards](#) adopted by the New Jersey Department of Education. During the latest professional development for the science curriculum on January 2, teachers had their own hands-on experience building marshmallow towers to support textbooks. This is just one example of our teachers being able to experience a lesson from a student's point of view, and then having the opportunity to apply that knowledge to their own lessons.

Our high school science curriculum will expand in the 2015-2016 school year with an Allied Health class, partnering with Rothman Institute to prepare students for science-related health careers. Throughout all grade levels, sustainability lessons will continue to be incorporated into the science curriculum to support the [District Sustainability Plan, which may be viewed by clicking here](#). We look forward to continuing to build our science curriculum and we'll keep you updated as new programs are implemented.

All of our district news, including the departments in our

February 17, 7 pm

[Negotiations Meeting](#)

February 17

[BOE Action Meeting](#)

February 24, 7 pm

former “e-news” – Up Front, District News, School News, Upcoming Events and Community News - is available [by clicking here](#). Check our [Activities Calendar](#) on the [District web site](#) for updates about upcoming events and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). You'll find the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 District Calendars [here](#). And visit our [YouTube channel](#) for videos from around the District.

And please keep [sending us any news](#) about what's happening in the District!

We wish you a happy Valentine's Day and a relaxing weekend.

Sincerely



Maureen Reusche, Ed. D.

Superintendent



### **STEM Projects Make Learning Fun**

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning is a cornerstone of the Cherry Hill Public Schools science curriculum. Implemented daily at our middle schools, STEM also is used periodically in our elementary schools.

At Bret Harte Elementary



### **Thomas Paine Elementary Named NJ School of Character**

Students at Thomas Paine Elementary gathered Monday, February 9 to celebrate the school's designation as a New Jersey School of Character.

New Jersey Schools of Character (NJSOC) are selected by the New Jersey Alliance for Social, Emotional and Character Development for having reached a standard of excellence within in the



### **Cat in the Hat Visits Barclay School**

Students at the Barclay Early Childhood Center were treated to a visit from the Cat in the Hat, pictured above, on Monday, February 9, as an early kick-off of Read Across America Week coming up on March 2.

The Cat's visit was thanks to Barclay speech therapist Diane Dressler, who at the NJEA Convention in November applied for the visit.

School, for example, fourth and fifth grade students received a taste of STEM education last fall with a fun Halloween twist. The students used Halloween treats in a hands-on project.

Students watched as teachers Miss Caldas, Miss Ciccotelli, Mr. Flood, Mrs. Floyd, Mrs. Fulcher, Mrs. Johnson, Ms. McCann, Mr. Nace and Ms. Squillace demonstrated how the engineering design process works by having partner discussions about what engineers do.

The directions were simple: Create the tallest tower using only 30 candy pumpkins and 40 toothpicks.

Students worked diligently in teams to meet their goal, while teachers acted as facilitators. Initially when the goal was not met, students were led to revise their prototype to improve their design. Many failures occurred during the lesson, but students were determined with the mindset that they can learn from those failures and make improvements. This led to taller stronger towers (as pictured above).

Throughout the activity, Harte's character education motto of being Harte SMART was evident. Students worked to Strive for excellence, be

area of character development. The applications of schools recognized as NJ Schools of Character are forwarded to the Character Education Partnership for consideration at the national level.

Paine's celebration was capped off by a visit from Mayor Chuck Cahn, pictured above (right), who congratulated all of the students, teachers, staff and Principal Dr. Kirk Rickansrud, pictured above (left), on their accomplishment. Mayor Cahn presented the school with a proclamation naming February 9, 2015 "Thomas Paine Elementary School Day."

Many students, teachers and staff wore their school colors, and students gave a big "Paine Tiger roar" in appreciation of the honors they received.

Students gathered in the all-purpose room to hear two Dr. Seuss stories: *Sam I Am* and *The Cat in the Hat*. The Cat made his surprise entrance during the reading of *The Cat in the Hat*, and pantomimed along to the story.

Read Across America Week was started 16 years ago by the National Education Association. It takes place around March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel).

More events commemorating Read Across America Week will take place around the District in the coming weeks.

Mindful of others, Accept, be Responsible, and work as a Team.

After the towers were finished, the students reconvened in their classrooms to discuss the connection between the engineering design process that was used to create the towers, and a video and article about the design process to create a "pumpkin chunkin' " catapult. Students then wrote essays explaining the connections between all three sources.

As Ms. Squillace noted, "It's days like today that students persevere through challenging times and see the progress that happens along the way!"

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