



Delran Township School District Parent Newsletter



March 2017 Edition 5

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MARCH GREETINGS!



Most students have homework on a daily basis. Homework struggles are real and National Council of the Teachers of Mathematics President, Matt Larson, has some real advice on handling homework even parents may not understand themselves. [Watch this clip](#) that aired on MomsEveryday.com and perhaps you can use some of these great ideas in your home.

There are different opinions about how much homework is appropriate for students. The most commonly held opinion is about ten minutes per grade level. In other words, a first grader would have about ten minutes of homework; a second grader about twenty minutes of homework; a third grader about thirty minutes of homework; and so on. If your child seems to be struggling with the amount of homework assigned each night talk to your child's teacher(s) about your concerns.

In our house homework is part of the afternoon and nightly ritual. When my kids were young we established homework routines; sitting in a spot in the home that offers an area that is quiet in order to concentrate; asking for help when it's needed, but only after you've tried on your own; and double-checking that all assigned work is completed. There are definitely nights that are smoother than others due to nightly sports-related activities. On practice nights it's even more important that homework is started before dinner so that no one is up late into the evening trying to finish. Nothing is worse than finding out there is homework due tomorrow and it's 9 o'clock at night.

All kids are different. Personalities and learning styles differ, as well as preferences for completing homework. Some kids need a quick break when they get home to recharge their batteries, other kids come home and grab a quick snack and get right to the business of starting homework. Supporting your child with their homework can be a time for learning a little more about what is happening in their life at school or a frustrating time for you and your child. Reach out to your child's teacher(s) if homework ever becomes a source of frustration or agony. The partnership between home and school can pave the way for smooth sailing with homework.



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THE MONTH OF MARCH IS... MARCH INTO THE
ARTS MONTH



"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls," said Pablo Picasso. The Cultural Arts program in Delran Township Schools realizes this aim through varied and rich educational offerings. Comprised of art, music, band and chorus classes, the Cultural Arts program helps students develop communication and self-expression abilities, performance skills, critical thinking skills, and an appreciation of history and culture. Elementary students enrich their cultural awareness through singing, playing instruments, painting, sculpting, and building their appreciation for cultural arts. Our students have multiple opportunities to showcase their talents through school concerts, high school drama shows, and art displays in the district.

Art classes in our elementary schools provide students with an understanding of symmetry, balance, and depth; art and art forms in nature; awareness of different subject matter in an artwork (e.g., portraits, scenery, still life, and abstraction); and choices of lines, colors and other visual attributes. During the month of February Millbridge Elementary students practiced some of these skills as they drew portraits of famous Americans. Portraits of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington hung outside the art room on a bulletin board in celebration of President's Day. Students at Millbridge are developing their expertise in symmetry, balance and depth by partnering with Kathy

Casper, an artist from Perkins Center of the Arts to make ceramic, mirrored and glass panels to decorate the Millbridge foyer. Each student in Millbridge have focused a panel on a theme of diversity by adding their artistic talents to a panel.



The music program is lively, engaging, and a real favorite among our youngest students, especially. Elementary students enjoy chorale singing and learn songs connected to different themes and time periods. Most recently students at Millbridge Elementary School could be heard singing the *This Land is Your Land*. Their beautiful voices wafted through the hallway near the cafeteria led by the musical direction of Mr. Odom. Delran Intermediate School recently welcomed a new music teacher into their faculty. Ms. Sarah Finnan joined Delran Intermediate School in February. Ms. Finnan has quickly learned that students at Delran Intermediate School enjoy singing songs from around the world and learning about different fascinating musical cultures! Students can be heard using their creativity to improvise and explore new instruments like bongo drums and recorders.

Not to be left out, the Drama program at the Delran Middle School and Delran High School allows our young thespians a chance to stretch their acting muscles with musical favorites like Rogers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* and *Singin' in the Rain Jr.* During the weekend of February 25th and March 3rd, Delran High School presented a contemporary take on the classic tale of Rogers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. This lush production featured an incredible orchestra, jaw-dropping transformations and moments the audience members loved—there were *ooohs* and *aaahhs* coming from all corners of the Morris R. Burton Performing Arts Center at Delran High School.

If you missed Rogers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* show be sure to catch the next show offered by our Delran Middle School Drama Club. *Singin' in the Rain Jr.* has all the makings of a Tinsel town tabloid headline – the starlet, the leading man and a love affair that could change lives and make or break careers! In silent movies, Don Lockwood and Lina Lamont are a hot item, but behind the scenes, things aren't always as they appear on the big screen! Meanwhile, Lina's squeaky voice might be the end of her career in "talking pictures" without the help of a talented young actress to do the talking and singing for her. *Singin' in the Rain* features hilarious situations, snappy dialogue and a hit-parade score of Hollywood standards

making it a guaranteed good time for performers and audience members alike.

Singin' in the Rain, Jr. Performance Dates & Times:

Friday, March 31st- 7pm
Saturday, April 1st – 1:30pm & 7pm
Sunday, April 2nd – 1:30 pm

All performances will be held at the Morris R. Burton Performing Arts Center at Delran High School, 50 Hartford Rd. Delran, NJ 08075. Online ticket sales for the public are live! To purchase - [Click Here!](#) Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and senior citizens. Tickets can also be purchased at the door, one hour prior to the performance. All seats are reserved. Congratulations to our Delran Middle School thespians for this wonderful upcoming show.

Friday, March 31st – 7pm

Kathy Selden – Skylar Brotz
Don Lockwood – Grant Stiglich
Lina Lamont – Anna Corradino
Cosmo Brown – Dalton Hennegan

Saturday, April 1st – 1:30pm

Kathy Selden- Claire Flynn
Don Lockwood – Grant Stiglich
Lina Lamont – Anna Corradino
Cosmo Brown – Christopher James

Saturday, April 1st – 7pm

Kathy Selden- Claire Flynn
Don Lockwood – Luke Shanahan
Lina Lamont – Olivia Jones
Cosmo Brown – Christopher James

Sunday, April 2nd – 1:30pm

Kathy Selden- Skylar Brotz
Don Lockwood – Luke Shanahan
Lina Lamont – Olivia Jones
Cosmo Brown – Dalton Hennegan

Delran Township's Cultural Arts programs foster creativity and provide opportunities for expression beyond the limits of language. We are so thankful for our many Cultural Arts teachers and their dedication to students and the arts. We welcome you to "wash the dust off your souls" at our school performances and exhibits!



K-5 MATHEMATICS PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Written by Mary Jo Hutchinson, K-12 Supervisor of Mathematics

The K-5 Mathematics Curriculum Committee has been hard at work since last summer revising the math curriculum and evaluating new resources for our students. I'd like to thank the following members of the Math Committee for their hard work, professionalism, attention to detail, and genuine concern for developing the best possible curriculum and resource materials for our teachers and students:

- Kindergarten: Laurel Healey and Kate Krowicki
- 1st Grade: Chrissie Cusack and Megan Jones
- 2nd Grade: Liz Huber, Trish Sorrentino, Elise Landolt, and Danielle Pugliese
- 3rd Grade: Michelle Woynshner and Kyle Hinkle
- 4th Grade: Cara Davis, Jaclyn Brown, and Jen Wigglesworth
- 5th Grade: Jason Caldwell and Kristin McKeen

Part of the curriculum revision process includes selecting new resources and materials to help us deliver the curriculum. The process of reviewing and evaluating materials began last year. Last summer and into the fall, the Math Committee members worked to study and deeply understand the NJ Student Learning Standards for Mathematics, working with supporting documents such as the Coherence Map and sample tasks to understand the appropriate level of rigor for each grade level.

This winter, the members of the Math Committee spent an entire day reviewing the sample materials for the three programs. They completed qualitative surveys to capture general thoughts, pros/cons, and questions. They also completed quantitative surveys in which they rated each program in the following 9 areas: alignment, rigor, presentation of content, support for diverse learners, teacher manual ease of use, parent/home support, assessment options, digital resources, and professional development/teacher support. In addition, all K-5 teachers were invited to give input into this decision. Sample materials were presented to each grade level, and interested teachers completed a survey rating each program on the following 4 areas: presentation of content, support for diverse learners, teacher manual ease of use, and parent/home support. The teacher survey yielded 90 responses!

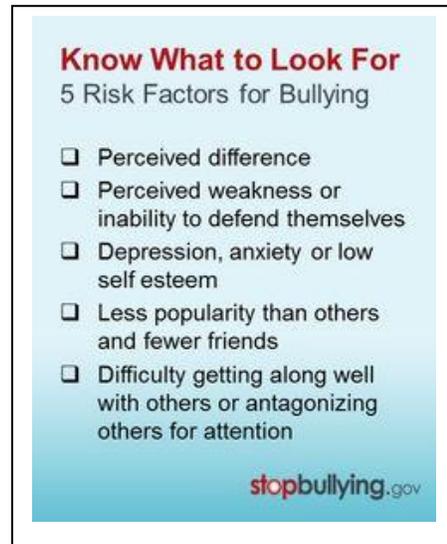
During the winter, Math Committee members had the opportunity to try a lesson or two with their class, using the sample materials. Trying the programs with students gave us a new and vivid window into each program, allowing us to see student engagement with the lessons and the materials, digital resources, and the flow of the lesson in real time. I'm so grateful to the Math Committee members who took the time to plan and execute trial lessons in their classrooms.

Finally, publishers were invited to formally present to the Math Committee. The publishers' representatives were impressed with how familiar we were with their programs, and with the questions Math Committee members asked.

Because of the Committee's preparation, we were able to get to a very fine level of detail with the representatives.

Once we select a program, next steps will include Math Committee members making a site visit to another school already using the selected program, and training before the end of the year for all teachers who will implement the new curriculum in September. This is a very exciting time, and I look forward to serving all of our teachers, as they work to give our students the very best mathematics instruction possible!

CYBERBULLYING; A PROBLEM FOR MANY AND SOLUTIONS TO CONSIDER



Contributing author, Mr. Iacovelli, Delran Intermediate School, Technology Teacher & Andrew Siemien, 4th Grade Student

Instagram. Snapchat. Facebook. What do these three social media platforms all have in common? That's right! Aside from being fun ways to communicate and socialize, they can be used to cyberbully. Texting, gaming, email, and websites could also play a part. Technology is a great tool to use to learn and explore, but along with the benefits can come some challenges. As parents, leaders, or educators, adults must be aware of the risks that students' face when using technology.

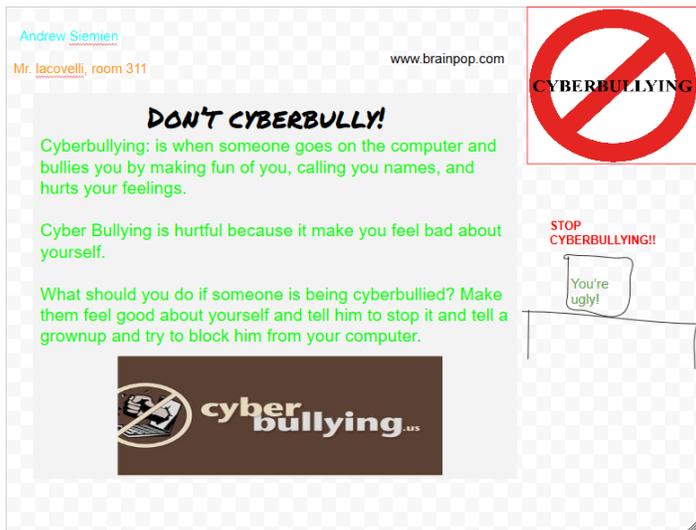
Cyberbullying is detrimental to students in many ways. It can cause depression, low self-esteem, and decreased enthusiasm for learning. If a student experiences high levels of stress due to a pattern of Cyberbullying, their grades could be greatly impacted or worse. Some students may even experience physical symptoms related to stress including headaches or nausea.

Cyberbullying can be a problem wherever technology exists. This makes it a universal issue. Due to that fact, Mr. Iacovelli's Computer Classes learned how to identify it, how it affects people, and what to do if it happens. Keeping copies of the messages in question can help sort out the facts. Responding to a bully with threats can escalate the problem. Learning to get help from an adult

allows students to get on a path to resolving the problem. An adult can block a cyberbully, involve others who can help such as school staff or a counselor, and help the student realize the situation is temporary and that there are ways to work through it.

After learning about cyberbullying, students chose to make posters, write stories, or make slide shows. In this way they could educate others on Cyberbullying in an effort to help decrease it. Below is one example of fantastic student work!

More information about Cyberbullying can be found [here](#) at a website by the federal government managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.



Special thanks to Andrew for contributing his work for the newsletter.

NEW NOVEL APPROVALS AND REVIEWS FOR FUTURE APPROVALS

An integral part of our Language Arts program is engaging our maturing readers and writers with outstanding young adult literature. In addition to the independent reading students select, some students also participate in Book Clubs. Book clubs involve four or five students who read, talk, and write about shared texts. Book clubs generally meet about two times a week, sometimes more, to discuss a text they are reading in sync with one another. Since the conversation relies heavily on students having read to the same point in their texts, students assign themselves several chapters a night. Book clubs provide teachers with another opportunity to push readers to read more.

The following titles were approved for use in Language Arts Units of Study:

Grade 8
Shipbreaker by Georg Rauch

Many teachers in the district are exploring other texts for possible Board of Education approval. Maybe you've read

a few of these titles. They are some of my favorites! Notice the variety of genres; fiction and non-fiction. It is imperative that our readers are reading both non-fiction texts and fiction texts in order to be well-rounded readers.

- I Will Always Write Back* by C. Alifirenka and M. Ganga
- A Warrior's Heart: Becoming a Man of Compassion and Courage* by Eric Greitens
- Unlikely Warrior A Jewish Soldier in Hitler's Army* by Rauch
- The Boy Who Challenged Hitler* by Phillip Hoose
- Peak* by Roland Smith
- Within Reach: My Everest Story* by Pftzer & Galvin
- The Edge* by Roland Smith
- The Finest Hours* by Michael J. Tougias
- Chew on This* by Schlosser and Wilson
- The Day the World Came to Town 9/11 in Gander.*
- Newfoundland* by Jim DeFede
- The Impossible Knife of Memory* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- Taking Flight* by Michaela DePrince

