



## Superintendent's Report October 21, 2021

The District Diversity Council Action Plan for 2021-2022 has 13 action steps. The [action plan](#) is posted on the district website main page with a link on the right side of the page. I'd like to provide an update on the progress that is being made:

- 1) Ms. Kahn and Ms. Klink, our school librarians, have created a document that lists available school library books that reflect diversity. Once the list is finalized, it will be posted to the school websites. (Action Item #1)
- 2) Our schools observed Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 – October 15, 2021, with many learning activities focused on Spanish-speaking cultures and the contributions of Hispanic people. For the month of October we are observing Global Diversity Awareness Month with read-aloud stories about diversity, learning about immigrants to the USA, persons with disabilities, art and music from around the world, sports and athletes from other cultures, reading and researching about the cultures represented in our schools, and learning why diversity matters. In November 2021, we will observe National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. (Action Item #3)
- 3) Ms. Earle and Ms. Manoochehri, TMS School Counselors, are working on creating a “new student buddy system” to welcome new students to the school. They have identified students who are interested in being part of a buddy system to welcome and support new students. They are meeting to plan out how the program will work. (Action Item #5)
- 4) At our Professional Development Day on October 4, 2021, teachers had time to share strategies they use for celebrating diversity in their classrooms. Teachers will continue to share strategies during grade level meetings and future faculty meetings. (Action Item #8)
- 5) Dr. Carmichael shared information with all faculty and staff about optional online professional development courses to address inclusivity and further create safe schools that celebrate our diverse population. (Action Item #9)

As we continue to make progress on the District Diversity Council Action Plan items, I will keep everyone updated.

Since school started on September 2, 2021, we have had a total of nine positive COVID-19 cases between both schools. Only those students or staff who were close contacts (within three feet for 15 minutes or longer) and were unvaccinated had to quarantine. We will continue the practice of requiring quarantine for unvaccinated close contacts. To assist our school nurse and contact tracers, we will be asking Tenakill Middle School parents to upload to Realtime the vaccination status information of students. Further, government officials have announced that Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine may be available within the next few weeks for children ages 5 to 11. Once that takes place, we will also ask Hillside Elementary School parents to upload vaccination status. As more students are vaccinated, there will be a reduction in the number of students who need to quarantine due to being a close contact in school.

The PTO is holding a Fall Social on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm at Brasserie Memere. Tickets are \$70 and are available for purchase until midnight tonight! Visit the Closter PTO website before midnight to purchase your tickets! The event promises to be a fun evening with passed hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and dancing!

Schools will be closed on Thursday, November 5, 2021, and Friday, November 6, 2021, for the New Jersey Education Association Convention. On those same days, Hillside Elementary School will be recognized officially as a Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education. The two-day Blue Ribbon event in Washington, D.C. is by invitation only, with only three district representatives permitted to attend. We will be scheduling a district celebration for this wonderful honor later in the school year and information will be shared with all!

*Vincent Mc Hale*