

The Bridge

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A monthly newsletter for educators from the
New Jersey Department of Education



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In this Issue

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In the AchieveNJ update, learn about two new Notices of Grant Opportunity (NGO) that provide opportunities in districts for talented educators to become achievement coaches....

Looking for some prepared talking points to help explain the Common Core to parents and community members? See the links in the Common Core Support article....

Interested in expanded learning opportunities? You might consider registering for the Institute on Expanded Learning: Opportunities for Student Success which is now open.

Students Change Hunger is a friendly food drive competition among schools throughout the state. Check the website for details on how to participate <http://studentschangehunger.org/>.

In 2015, your school district might be part of a random sample for the Student Health Survey which yields valuable information about health and behavior trends among students. For more information see the health survey alert....

Special Education Teacher Mark Mautone Selected State Teacher of the Year

Mark Mautone began his journey in the field of special education when working for Bergen County Special Services in 1995 as a one-to-one aide for a child with Angelman Syndrome. This experience provided Mark with the ambition to pursue a life-long career in special education. Throughout his teaching career, he has educated children with mild-to-severe disabilities.

Mark is currently the lead preschool teacher in the ABA program for children with autism at Wallace Elementary School in the Hoboken School District. As an autism teacher, Mark works very closely with the parents of his students. "When children enter my class, my focus is not only on assessing, programming, and teaching I also spend a lot of time talking to the parents about their child, autism-related topics and ways in which we can work together to ensure that their child receives the maximum benefits of their educational program. At times, I am the only resource for parents. My availability for parents is not just during school hours. I understand the impact this has on a family. I make myself available to parents outside of school time and on the weekends," said Mark.

"Mr. Mautone has a deep passion for helping his students overcome the challenges they face so that they can receive the best possible education. His dedication to the success of disabled students extends far beyond the classroom," said Acting Commissioner Hesse. "He is an inspiration to teachers, parents and members of the community."

When Mark is not teaching, he shares his knowledge locally, nationally and globally. He has presented for Apple, Macworld, Autism Speaks, Autism NJ, and the Aruba Autism Foundation, among other groups. Since 2012, he has generously offered his expertise to design a mobile App for the National Catholic Partnership for People with Disabilities in Washington D.C. This App will be used globally for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities to participate in religious education. Mark has authored numerous articles and lent his expertise for interviews to media outlets. In 2016, Mark will be a featured teacher in the college textbook, "Exceptional Children: An Introduction to Special Education".



State TOY Mark Mautone uses technology to teach children with learning disabilities.

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Congratulations to the Nine New Jersey Public Schools Named 2014 "Blue Ribbon Schools"

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan named nine public schools as 2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools in recognition of their high student achievement levels and the quality of their programs.

Acting Commissioner David Hespe offered his congratulations to “the students, parents, and educators at the nine high-performing schools for their dedication to excellence and for providing programs that will prepare their students to graduate ready for college and career. It truly is a great honor for a school to receive such national recognition for all the hard work that goes into education every day. While the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program emphasizes student achievement, it also

recognizes leadership that clearly articulates goals and holds everyone to high standards. It rewards a partnership of families and educators who work together toward a shared vision.”

National Blue Ribbon Schools are honored at an annual awards ceremony in Washington, DC, where each receives a plaque and flag to signify its exemplary status. These schools serve as exemplars for other schools throughout the nation. Details of their achievements are provided on the U.S. Department of Education's [website](#).

The nine New Jersey public schools that earned the 2014 Blue Ribbon Schools designation include:

| County | School District | School Name |
|-----------|---|---|
| Hudson | Union City School District | Woodrow Wilson Elementary School |
| Mercer | | Pace Charter School of Hamilton |
| Middlesex | Middlesex County Vocational School District | Allied Health & Biomedical Science |
| Monmouth | Monmouth County Vocational School District | Biotechnology High School |
| Morris | Chatham School District | Milton Avenue School |
| Morris | Mendham Township School District | Mendham Township Middle School |
| Ocean | Ocean County Vocational School District | Performing Arts Academy |
| Somerset | Bernards Township School District | Mount Prospect Elementary School |
| Union | Elizabeth School District | William F. Halloran School #22 |



Reap Positive Results with Expanded Learning Strategies

How expanded learning opportunities can have a positive impact on student attendance, behavior and coursework is the focus of a one-day program for school leaders that takes place November 20, 2014. The event is sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in partnership with the New Jersey School Age Care Coalition, New Jersey’s Statewide Afterschool Network, and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. It will be held at the Princeton Marriott Hotel and Conference Center at Forrestal, 100 College Road East, Princeton, NJ. Registration for the Institute on Expanded Learning: Opportunities for Student Success is now open.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Terry Peterson, director of the Afterschool and Community Learning Network and former chief education advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Education, will discuss strategies for school leaders to implement research-based practices that use out-of-school time differently to make positive impacts on students; align out-of-school-time activities with the school day; effectively engage community partners; and utilize available funding to support expanded learning programs.

Registration is open to all public and nonpublic school leaders and may be accessed at www.njsacc.org.

The \$149 registration fee includes materials and lunch. For more information, please contact Haydee Y. Perez-Livingston, coordinator, NJDOE Extended Educational Services Unit, at haydee.perez@doe.state.nj.us or (609) 292-5935.

Support for Common Core

As schools implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in their daily instruction, it is important to ensure that parents and community members are informed about what these instructional changes mean for our students and what they can expect to see their children working on throughout the year. The NJDOE, in partnership with statewide education associations, designed a Common Core brochure to help parents and community members understand the Common Core standards. The NJDOE has also prepared talking points that members of the education community may wish to use when speaking about the Common Core at back-

to-school events, community forums, school board meetings, in school or district newsletters or other interactions with parents and the public.

Common Core Update

- Superintendent Talking Points
- Principal CCSS Talking Points
- School Board Talking Points
- Teacher Talking Points

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/CCSSNJBrochure.pdf>

SUPPORTED BY THOSE IN THE KNOW

Principals support the Common Core because these clear, consistent and targeted standards will benefit students in each classroom throughout New Jersey.

- PAT WRIGHT, NEW JERSEY PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS ASSOC.

For too many students are coming to community colleges without being academically prepared for college-level work. The new Common Core State Standards are aligned with the skills and knowledge necessary for college and career readiness.

- DR. RAYMOND YANNUZZI, NJ COUNCIL OF COUNTY COLLEGES

The Common Core fosters critical thinking, focuses on problem solving and gives students a rich understanding of language and math.

- DR. BRIAN ZYCHOWSKI, NEW JERSEY ASSOC. OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce believes that the Common Core standards will improve all students' ability to succeed in the ultra-competitive worlds of college admissions and job acquisition.

- DANA EGRCZKY, NJ CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NJPTA supports the Common Core State Standards initiative as a first step toward ensuring that all of New Jersey's current and future students receive the best possible education no matter where they live.

- DEBBIE TYRRELL, NJ PARENT TEACHER ASSOC.

New Jersey selected the Common Core standards in 2010 to foster the skills required by employers and colleges today, such as higher-order thinking, problem solving and reasoning ability.

- DAVE HESPE, NJ DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NJEA supports the Common Core State Standards as the next step in continuing to raise expectations for New Jersey's public school students. When educators are given the time and resources to retool their curricula as needed, students will benefit by achieving the new standards. As that work begins, the state can adjust the standards, as needed, to ensure they are age-appropriate and are meeting the needs of all students.

- WENDELL STEINHILBER, NJ EDUCATION ASSOC.

New Jersey has a 20-year tradition of successful standards-based education, and the state's adoption of the Common Core four years ago strengthens that foundation. Your local school board, working with its staff, selects the curriculum that will enable students to meet the standards.

- DR. LARRY FEINSD, NJ SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOC.

All students in New Jersey deserve an education that will pave the way for their success beyond high school. The Common Core represents New Jersey's continued commitment to that goal.

- JANELLEN DUFFY, JERSEYCAN

THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: GOOD FOR STUDENTS. GOOD FOR NEW JERSEY.



GET EDUCATED AT www.njpta.org/common-core-state-standards

AchieveNJ UPDATE

Grant Opportunity: Achievement Coaches

Recently, the NJ Department of Education posted a press release announcing two new grant opportunities <http://www.state.nj.us/education/news/2014/1021ngo.htm>. The goal of the New Jersey Achievement Coaches program is to empower several of our outstanding educators to provide direct support to their peers through high-quality training and resources. The content of this training will be developed by our districts through the second grant opportunity: the New Jersey Achievement Coaches Content Development Program. Funding for these programs is intended to cover educators' work, time and travel expenses, as well as district management of these activities. Please review this information and encourage your district leaders to apply.

- Visit the [AchieveNJ website](#) for more information.

Syllabus for Success: Evaluation Leadership

Throughout the first year of AchieveNJ implementation, the Office of Evaluation had direct contact with tens of thousands of educators and nearly every school district in the state. In these conversations, districts that have embraced a collaborative and reflective approach to implementation reported the most positive impact of the new system. To help support such an approach, we have created an optional "Syllabus for Success" ([Word](#) | [PDF](#)) that provides useful monthly activities for district and school leadership groups to help foster discussion and strategic action. We invite you to send feedback about this resource to educatorevaluation@doe.state.nj.us.

ScIP Workshops

The Office of Evaluation is offering increased support for School Improvement Panels (ScIPs) through regional training opportunities for district personnel and/or ScIP members. These sessions are focused on the effective use of data to inform decision-making and collaborative planning to integrate promising practices from around the state. This workshop includes the basic function of the ScIP and how to move toward application of best practices and strategy-sharing. For more information and to register, please visit the [AchieveNJ Events Page](#).

State Professional Learning Advisory Group Holds First Meeting

The Office of PD hosted the first meeting of the State Committee on Professional Learning (SCPL), a stakeholder advisory group consisting of members representing teachers, school and district administrators, higher education, school boards and the community who will work with the Department to support high-quality professional learning for teachers and school leaders. At their first meeting on September 26, the members reviewed the recently released revised national professional standards for school leaders in order to provide feedback to the standards' development team prior to the release of the final version. Once the final version of the standards is released, the committee will review them again and make a recommendation regarding their use in New Jersey's leadership development framework. For more information, visit the [SCPL web page](#).

Special Education Teacher Mark Mautone Selected State Teacher of the Year *(continued from p.1)*

The New England Center for Children with Autism, one of the most prominent and comprehensive programs in the nation for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, recently asked Mark to serve as an advisory member for the Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia program, a system for special educators to assess, teach and evaluate the progress of students with autism.

His passion for teaching is demonstrated by the countless acts he engages in to support students, parents and the community. Mark believes all children, despite the obstacles, deserve the highest quality of education possible so that they can learn to their maximum potential and lead a productive life.

Nominate a Deserving Educator:

The New Jersey Department of Education is pleased to announce the Governor's Educator of the Year Program which integrates the above-mentioned Teacher of the Year Program with the Governor's Teacher/Educational

Services Professionals Recognition Program. This new program will continue to recognize our state's best teachers and educational services professionals.

Therefore, we hope that you will take the time to nominate a deserving educator for the Governor's Educator of the Year Program through the open nomination process that each participating principal should have in place currently or in the very near future.

Through educator recognition programs, the New Jersey Department of Education wants to recognize as many educators as possible that are making a difference by providing quality teaching and learning experiences for all students.

For detailed information on the Governor's Educator of the Year Program and other recognition programs that the New Jersey Department of Education offers, please visit:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/educators/rpr/recognition>

News,
Upcoming Events &
Professional Development
Opportunities



Don't forget to check out the Department's calendar of events (<http://education.state.nj.us/events/>) to view upcoming events that may be of interest to you or your district.



Students Change Hunger

The New Jersey Federation of Food Banks is conducting its third annual Students Change Hunger campaign. Students Change Hunger is a friendly food drive competition among schools throughout the state. Last year 213 schools participated, with more than 168,000 pounds of food collected. This year the campaign will run until Friday, November 21. Please share this with key staff who could facilitate participation in this fall's competition. Use the following link for registration and more information: <http://studentschangehunger.org/>.

New Jersey Student Health Survey to be Administered in 2015 to a Random Sample

Attention New Jersey High School Administrators and Staff:

Your school may be randomly selected to participate in the 2015 New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS) conducted by the New Jersey Department of Education with funding support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Departments of Human Services, Health, Children and Families and Law and Public Safety. The survey is administered by Rutgers University, Bloustein Center for Survey Research. The NJSHS follows the standards of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) developed and administered nationally by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Your support is essential to the success of this biennial student survey which enables state agencies to:

- Plan effective health programs specifically for New Jersey's youth population;
- Provide high school students, teachers, and parents with factual information; and
- Foster pro-social youth behaviors.

The NJSHS is one of the state's primary sources of information about such issues as diet, physical activity, obesity, sexual behavior, and safety behaviors among youth. Information about alcohol, tobacco, other drug use, depression and violence including bullying is also collected through this survey. For additional information, please go to <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

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