

The Panther Press

VOLUME

17

Number 2

Your Source for News from Point Pleasant Borough Schools

Nominations sought for Ocean County Teacher of the Year

The Point Pleasant School District proudly announces their participation in the Ocean County Teacher Recognition Program. The annual program provides an opportunity for one Teacher or one Educational Services Professional* from each of Point Pleasant's four schools to be honored. Teacher and Educational Services Professional nominations are being sought from both community and staff members.

The Criteria for Selection of Teachers is as follows:

- use of creativity and innovation in the classroom;
- an ability to increase student achievement through a learning-focused environment;
- contributing to the professional growth of colleagues;
- encouraging community service and service learning opportunities as a means of enriching academic learning; and,
- effective use of technology to advance learning

The Criteria for Selection of Educational Services Professionals is as follows:

- positive interactions with students, staff, and parents while functioning as frontline advocate for the student between home and school;
- fostering an appropriate environment for learning and exploring creative alternatives to enable all students to achieve to their fullest potential;
- supporting classroom instruction by addressing the educational, social and emotional needs of all students; and,
- personal interactions with students that demonstrate professionalism while retaining respect, humor, compassion and concern for the whole child.

In addition, in alignment with the Department of Education's Strategic Plan, the following criteria should be considered:

- use of creativity, innovation and efficiency in the classroom;
- ability to increase student achievement of the NJ Student Learning Standards through a learning-focused environment;
- ability to contribute to the quality of the professional development in their district; and;
- ability to utilize educational technology in an effective and efficient manner.

Members of the Point Pleasant community who would like to nominate a teacher or educational services professional for consideration should send a letter naming the teacher nominated and reasons for nomination reflecting the above criteria to:

Susan Ladd
Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
Point Pleasant Schools
2100 Panther Path
Point Pleasant, NJ 08742

Nominations will be reviewed and selections determined by a committee of community representatives and staff members.

"As the engineers of successful student outcomes, education professionals play a vital role in the development of a strong, well-educated society," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "It is essential that we, as a society, recognize and applaud their contributions, demonstrating our gratitude for their hard work and dedication to the education of our youth."

"The Ocean County Teacher Recognition Program provides an excellent opportunity for school systems and their communities to honor exemplary education professionals," he said. "I strongly encourage anyone who has been positively affected by an exceptional Point Pleasant Borough teacher or educational services professional to express their appreciation and nominate that person."

"With so many outstanding educators in our district, the challenge will be selecting just one nominee from what is sure to be an extremely competitive pool," added the Superintendent.



ORS Callan's Character Crew deliver food to Meal at Noon [Courtesy of Sheila Buck]

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Boro students win First Place in Congressional App Challenge

When used effectively, technology enhances standards-based learning across the curriculum. Because technological fluency is essential for living and working in the 21st century and beyond, the Point Pleasant School District has made every effort to integrate technology into virtually every classroom and curriculum content area.

The goal of technological lessons is to teach students to become independent, responsible and effective users of information and technology. Through daily, interdisciplinary technology use, students learn to conduct research, solve problems, and think critically while gaining the essential communication and vocational skills that are necessary for success in the global economy.

"The Point Pleasant School District offers diverse opportunities for students to not only become proficient users of computers and mobile technology but also learn valuable programming and back end design skills," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "These opportunities have better prepared our students for the technological demands that await them at college and in their professional lives and have provided them with increased opportunities to achieve success."

The technology-based educational opportunities available in Point Pleasant Borough High School teacher Nick Gattuso's class continue to go a step further, not only providing students with opportunities to gain valuable professional experience but also allowing them to put their technological savvy to use to affect meaningful change with the development of a series of specialized applications and programs for their fellow students and

members of the community.

The understanding that students taking his classes will use their programming skills to affect positive change stems from Mr. Gattuso's idealistic approach to computer programming – both as a teacher and in practice – which has been inspired by a moral imperative to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Over the last 15 or so years, Mr. Gattuso and his students have earned a reputation for dedicating classroom projects to affect positive change in their school and the community.

"I try to teach my students how to use their programming, engineering and problem-solving skills for good," said Mr. Gattuso.

Their work also tends to earn Mr. Gattuso's students recognition and acclaim for their programming work.

"The awards and recognition they receive for doing outstanding works speaks not only to their programming skills and talent but also to their dedication and how seriously they view the responsibility to put their talents to good use," he said.

When each new project is introduced, Mr. Gattuso assembles his students into project management teams that mirror a professional work environment. Each team features a resource manager, technical manager and lead programmer, who work collaboratively to complete the assigned project. He also ensures the students know exactly for whom they are designing each project and the

Continued on Page 3

PPBHS presents *Peter and the Starcatcher*

From the home of Hellen Keller in Tuscomb, Alabama where Miracles were worked, to Civil War Era New England and the home of four Little Women, the diverse Fall productions staged by Point Pleasant Borough High School's Performing Arts Department have earned a reputation for taking their audiences on unforgettable journeys. Their most recent production was no exception, transporting audiences first aboard two ships bound for the remote kingdom of Rundoon and later shipwrecked on an isolated island for the tale of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, which explores the life of the immortal boy who never grew up, before he became known as Peter Pan.

Adapted by Rick Elice from Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's 2004 children's novel of the same name, the play tells the backstory of one of literatures most beloved characters and how he went from a nameless orphan to the legendary Peter Pan. Throughout his journey, other familiar figures from the literary world created by J.M. Barrie are introduced and their origins explained, including the Lost Boys, Mrs. Darling, Smee, Captain Hook and Tinkerbell.

Set in the late 1800's, the play follows the two ships on their journey to transport the Queen's precious cargo of starstuff, a powerful, magical celestial

substance, which has been loaded into a trunk on one of the ships, to Rundoon, where it will be disposed of. The crews aboard the two ships - the H.M.S Wasp and the H.M.S. Neverland – feature an assorted cast of characters, including Lord Leonard Aster [played by Max Brushaber and his precocious daughter Molly [played with charm and aplomb by Emily Strassheim] along with her nanny, Mrs. Bumble [Sarah Mansfield] as well as three orphans from the St. Norbert's Orphanage for Lost Boys [Michael Puciul as Prentiss, Madeline Dalelio as Ted and Ryan Jasaitis as Boy (Peter)] and a group of pirates in disguise.



Peter and the Starcatcher cast members

Through the play's rich storytelling and songs, Peter and the *Starcatcher* explains the origins of Captain Hook; how Peter Pan earned his immortality and the ability to fly; how a bird was transformed into a mischievous pixie named Tinkerbell; and how a washed-up plank from their recent shipwreck gave the island the name Neverland.

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"From its many adaptations and iterations, the tale of Peter Pan is one that is known and beloved around the world," said Director Ian Kearns. "Thanks to the film and musical Finding Neverland, we're even familiar with how author J.M. Barrie came to write the classic story. Peter and the Starcatcher is unique in that it provides insight into Peter Pan's favorite characters and how they came to inhabit Neverland. It's a magical story of bravery and friendship and treasuring that which matters most."

"Point Pleasant Borough High School's production of Peter and the Starcatcher made for a truly electrifying theater experience," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "From the expert leadership provided by Director Ian Kearns, to the pitch-perfect performances of the cast, framed by the tutelage of Production

Manager Becky Muraglia and Musical Director Terry Bojanowski Peter and the Starcatcher is a shining example of the level of excellence achieved through expert collaboration.

"I'd also like to express my gratitude to the parents and community for their continued support, and for dedicating countless hours, energy and resources to this and every production," added the Superintendent. "Their support is vital to the Point Pleasant Borough's Performing Arts longstanding legacy of excellence."

Peter and the Starcatcher's cast: Ryan Jasaitis as Boy/Peter; Michael Puciul as Prentiss; Madeline Dalelio as Ted; Maxwell Brushaber as Lord Leonard Aster; Emily Strassheim as Molly Aster; Sarah Mansfield as Mrs. Bumbrake; Alex Johnson as Capt. Robert Falcon Scott; Ashling McNally as Gremplin; Jack Henry as Bill Slank; Sean O'Connor as Alf; Meg Leahy as Mack; Donovan Lee as Black Stache; Matthew Wells as Smee; Nathan Hancock as Sanchez; Michael Petillo as Fight Prawn; Adrian Wittmann as Hawking Clam; and Emily Mickle as Teacher. The Story Tellers included Elizabeth Black, Brianna Cohen, Mary Grace Collins, Nicole DeJacimo, Katie Doblovosky, Kelly Fingerhut, Haley Hiller, Aislyn Lapp, Owen McCarthy, Kelly Merk, Rebecca Morehouse, Mikaela Rappaport, Kyle Rodberg, Ben Stefan, Florencia Ventura and Stefanie Wittmann.

**POINT PLEASANT BOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL'S
PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT
PRESENTS**

GREASE

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14 - 7:00 P.M.
THURSDAY, MARCH 15 - 7:00 P.M.
FRIDAY, MARCH 16 - 7:30 P.M.
SATURDAY, MARCH 17 - 7:30 P.M.**

**LOREN DONLEY AUDITORIUM
@POINT PLEASANT HIGH SCHOOL**

Don't miss Point Pleasant Borough High School's spring musical production Grease at the Loren Donley Auditorium beginning March 14 through March 17, 2018. Tickets are \$10 each and available by calling the box office at (732) 701-1900 extension 2218.

District teachers become the students at professional development days

One of the most common misconceptions surrounding the teaching profession is that those in it, specifically kindergarten through grade 12 teachers, do not work when school is not in session; however, nothing could be further than the truth. Whether in summer, when many educators either teach - summer school, summer enrichment or extended school year programs - or else spend a good portion of their break busy preparing for the coming school year - developing lesson plans or writing curriculum, or during the school year on designated breaks when they are hard at work preparing for their students return. And no matter the time of year, teachers always stay busy by taking part in professional development courses that are designed to expand and enrich their professional knowledge and skills, enhance their instructional techniques and improve their efficiency.

"During the summer months, district teachers took part in both in- and out-of- district professional development courses, which have included curriculum updates and a variety of articulation sessions focusing on AP courses, literacy units, and new electives," said Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Susan Ladd. "Trainings have also taken place on the Google Platform for Education with workshops on Google Keep, Google Forms and a variety of Google extensions and apps to support learners. And additional technology workshops have been offered to educate our teachers in the use of supplemental programs and tools to help streamline classroom instruction and make for a more effective and efficient learning experience."

Prior to the start of the school year, district teachers also attended Panther Academy, the district's intensive annual professional development program.

At September's professional development day district staff participated in a variety of different trainings that included everything from how to administer Narcan, a first response treatment for opioid overdose, elementary English Language Arts focused on the continued integration of Reader's and Writer's Workshop, additional trainings on the Next Generation Science Standards, which were introduced at the elementary level this year.

"The new standards, which are now implemented district-wide, present a new approach to science education that is more consistent with the way scientists work and think," said Dr. Ladd.

Under the new standards, students engage in hands-on experimentation and use critical thinking skills to design investigations that answer questions about the world around them.

An additional professional development day was held at the district on Oct. 6.

Although no students were present, school was in session on Oct. 6 for the district's teaching staff who

were taking part in comprehensive educational workshops offered during one of the district's designated professional development days.

The early-year professional development day builds upon concepts the teachers have learned during the summer workshops as well as at Panther Academy. The courses also serve as the prerequisite for additional workshops offered later in the school year and the following summer.

During the October program, teachers received approximately six hours of specialized training in specific programs, tools and techniques relevant to the subjects and grades they teach.

At the elementary level, teachers spent the day participating in continued Reader's and Writer's Workshop trainings.

"Writer's Workshop builds students' fluency through immersion in the writing process, the goal of which is to foster lifelong writing skills," said District Supervisor of English Language Arts & Social Studies Heather Karagias.

The program, according to Ms. Karagias, acts as a complement to Reader's Workshop, the district's comprehensive K-5 Reading Language Arts program, now in its third full year of implementation.

"Both Reader's and Writer's Workshop employ multiple strategies that help students become thoughtful, critical readers and writers who are effective communicators, both in spoken and written word," she said.

Additional elementary workshops were offered in the use of iReady, an adaptive Diagnostic tool for reading and mathematics that pinpoints student needs and monitors their progress showing whether students are on track to achieve learning targets, and Mindfulness Training for related arts teachers.

While their elementary counterparts were learning about the structures that support daily writing habits, Point Pleasant Borough's middle and high school teachers were busy expanding their professional knowledge and skills in their choice of specialized technology-themed workshops that focused on specific technological tools and programs to enhance instruction and improve teacher efficiency and to improve articulation across grades and the curriculum.

Among the courses offered were, Achieve3000, STEM Planning, Mindfulness, DBQ or Document-Based Questions and iReady.

"The course content was developed for our teachers, by our teachers," said Dr. Susan Ladd. "Surveys were administered to our grade 6-12 teachers inquiring into the specific topics that they wanted addressed by the district's professional development program. The overwhelming consensus was they wanted to improve their technological skills and access more of the

countless technological resources available to educators."

The question then became on which of the myriad technological resources the district would focus.

"We selected a number of tools that the district presently uses like Achieve3000, which provides differentiated reading and writing instruction, strengthening students' literacy skills," Dr. Ladd said.

The district also sought to further encourage teachers' use of the Google suite of Apps for Education as well as their pursuit of certification through the Google Certified Educator Program.

"The Google Certified Educator program is designed for educators who wish to demonstrate proficiency in using Google for Education tools," she said. "Teachers that pursue certification must complete numerous hours of independent coursework that provides an in-depth look at Google's many supplemental learning tools and how to effectively apply them to classroom learning."

The program offers two levels of certifications, indicating an educator's mastery of Google for Education's tools, which are only earned through a rigorous cycle of training and practice that culminates in an increasingly complex performance-based exam.

"The district currently has 19 Level 1 and two Level II Google Certified Educators," she added. "Though we are very proud of the teachers who have already earned their certification and for their commitment to 21st century teaching and learning, we would like to see that number increase."

"Offering so many distinct professional development workshops during one day, though somewhat challenging logistically, made the most sense to maximize teachers' learning opportunities and to ensure they were learning what was most personally relevant and interesting," Dr. Ladd said.

Fortunately, the district didn't have to look far for the workshops' instructors, having tapped district teachers to lead the sessions.

"We are fortunate to have a staff full of outstanding educators, many of whom are proficient on some of the most current and innovative technological tools," she said.

"Plus, as district teachers they are intimately familiar with our educational philosophy and vision and are therefore, uniquely qualified to educate their peers."

"This collaboration means more district educators become proficient with these tools, which they can then turnkey, adding what they've learned and continuing to share best practices with their peers, resulting in a unified digital learning experience across the district and unparalleled articulation between grades and schools," she added.

Point Pleasant Borough High School adds new college-credit earning opportunities

As the costs of higher education continue to escalate, ambitious high school students are compelled to seek ways to lessen the financial burden by participating in college credit earning opportunities while attending high school. From dual enrollment programs, which allow high school students to supplement their high school course schedule with complementary college courses, to independent study, educational co-ops and vocational programs, today's students have unprecedented access to opportunities that give them a head start on higher education.

At Point Pleasant Borough High School, the 2017-18 school year has brought increased college credit-earning opportunities for students thanks to the addition of Advanced Placement Human Geography – bringing the total number of AP courses offered at the high school to 18 - and new dual enrollment programs Syracuse University Project Advance and Tomorrow's Teachers.

Though AP courses remain one of the most popular methods for high school students to earn college credits, dual enrollment programs are beginning to catch on – fast!

The Point Pleasant Borough High School proudly offers a selection of dual enrollment programs offered in cooperation with Ocean County College, Monmouth University and Syracuse University Project Advance [SUPA] as well as the Ocean County Vocational Technical School programs.

One of this year's newest programs – Syracuse University's Project Advance - provides district students the opportunity to take Syracuse University courses embedded in the regular school day, earning college credit, which they may

transfer to their post-secondary school. The first SUPA course - Principles and Contemporary Issues in Sports Management – was introduced at the high school this year.

Tomorrow's Teachers is another new program that was introduced this year for juniors and seniors who aspire to become teachers. The one-year course allows prospective teachers to gain specialized training and hands-on experience in teaching. Fairleigh Dickinson, Rider and Stockton Universities grant college credit to students who successfully complete the program.

In addition to embedded Ocean County College courses, the district also offers Jump Start, another college-credit earning opportunity with the college. Jump Start allows students to take college classes at OCC's main campus or at any number of satellite schools, including Point Pleasant Borough High School.

An agreement in place with Monmouth University allows district students to participate in a Computer Science cooperative with the school. The program combines classroom-based learning with practical experience, providing a pathway to acceptance at Monmouth as well as specific scholarship-earning opportunities.

Another new program that is currently in the final stages of development is the College Academy, an early college graduation program administered by Ocean County College. The program allows district high school students to complete and earn their Associate's Degree prior to earning their high school diploma. Courses will be embedded in the regular school day and taught by high school teachers. Participating students will receive a break in OCC tuition costs.

"Concurrent enrollment programs, educational partnerships and other specialized learning opportunities allow our students to get a head start on college while helping better prepare them for the rigors of college life," said Director of Curriculum & Instruction Susan Ladd, Ed.D.

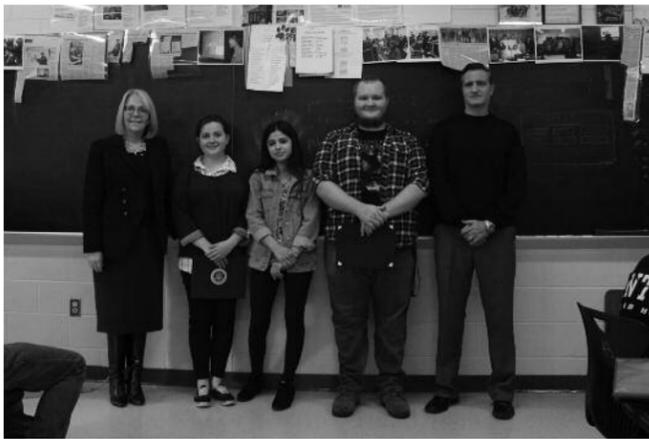
Plus, studies have proven that participation in college-credit earning programs is highly correlated with college readiness," she said. "These programs not only provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a post-secondary environment but also increase the likelihood that students earn college degrees within a standard four-year time frame and achieve higher grade point averages compared to other students."

Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith stressed the economic benefits of dual enrollment programs, saying, "Dual enrollment programs can really take some of the sting out of skyrocketing college costs. Students can earn college credits for a fraction of the cost so not only are they getting a jump start on their college educations but they're also saving on their long-term tuition costs. A student exiting high school can apply an earned associate's degree or college credits towards their bachelor's degree for substantial savings.

"The Point Pleasant School District plans to continue investigating additional college-credit-earning opportunities to academically challenge our students while providing them with every opportunity to achieve success," he said.

For more information about Point Pleasant Borough High School's college-credit earning opportunities, students should visit their guidance counselor.

App Challenge (continued from page 1)



Congressional App Challenge winners with Congressman Smith rep

potential impact it could have on the life of the recipient, leading to unique opportunities for collaboration and inclusive learning.

Panthers Assisted Learning Software, or PALS is one such project. The suite of assistive learning applications that have been in development by Mr. Gattuso's students over the last six years are designed for students enrolled in the high school's Life Skills program for students with multiple disabilities.

The apps, which include, a navigational tool to help students new to the Life Skills program navigate the high school; a program to simplify units of liquid measure; a money-changing app; a shopping simulator designed to help the students navigate the supermarket; and PALS HELP, a new collection of apps that help the students perform tasks related to their jobs at Ocean Medical Center. The PALS apps have earned Mr. Gattuso's students not only the appreciation of their peers and the teachers from the Life Skills Program but also the recognition of various organizations, like, the NJEA documentary news magazine program Classroom Close-up NJ, which featured a profile of the Mr. Gattuso's class, students and the apps last year. The PALS initiative has also been honored by the New Jersey Schools Boards Association, who awarded the apps their 2016 Innovations in Special Education Award, as well as finalist standing in the 2017 STEAM TANK Challenge.

Modeled after the popular "Shark Tank" television series, the STEAM Tank Challenge helps promote innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) education initiatives taking place in New Jersey schools. Now entering its third year, the Challenge invites school district teams to compete in creative problem-solving.

PALS HELP was one of 15 New Jersey high school projects selected statewide as Competition finalists, and one of two designed by Mr. Gattuso's students.

In addition to PALS HELP, Mr. Gattuso's students also presented the Point Pleasant Borough High School App to the judges at the STEAM Tank Challenge. The Point Pleasant Borough High School app, which is available for download on all Android and Apple devices, provides district high school students with key school information like daily announcements, lunch menus, schedules and calendars as well as local lunch spots and other helpful links. An update made to the app last year added a new security feature that allows the district to send emergency alerts to notify students in the event of a school lockdown situation.

"Our high school has an open lunch policy, allowing students to leave campus during lunch," said Superintendent Smith. "We struggled with a method by which we could notify students during emergency situations. Where the district's Instant Alert System fell short, Mr. Gattuso's students came to the rescue, making modifications to the high school information app based on my and the Point Pleasant Police Department's specifications. The resulting app meets all the necessary requirements and enables us to send alerts from a secure, web-based control panel. In the event of a lockdown or other emergency, the app will send a text notification advising students not to return to school."

Mr. Gattuso's students recently added yet another award to their already impressive list of achievements when the app "Lunch Buddy," created by group of four of his students was named First Place winner in the Fourth Congressional District's 2017 Congressional App Challenge.

The Congressional App Challenge is a competition aimed at encouraging U.S. high school students to learn how to code by creating their own applications. One-hundred-ninety-three congressional districts in 43 states participate in the Challenge that is intended to highlight the value of computer science and STEM education, among them is New Jersey's own 4th District, represented by Congressman Chris Smith.

Representatives from Congressman Smith's office recently visited Point Pleasant Borough

High School, where they presented app designers Adrian Wittmann, Luke Boylan, Theresa Cardone and Jaspreet Kaur with certificates in honor of their app that was designed to assist Life Skills students with finding classmates to sit with at lunchtime.

"The PALS applications as well as the Lunch Buddy app perfectly align with the Life Skills program's goal of teaching students with multiple disabilities vocational sufficiency while promoting community integration between them and their non-disabled peers," said Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services Rita Miller. "These apps provide our students with multiple disabilities with new ways to achieve their potential, ultimately helping them to become independent members of the community.

"Plus, the development of the apps continues to facilitate increased interaction between our students," she said. "This interaction is central to the inclusive school climate that has been established here in the Point Pleasant School District."

In addition to receiving a \$250 credit for Amazon Web Service to be split among the Congressional App Challenge winners, the students along with Mr. Gattuso - have been invited to attend the "House of Code" App Challenge Reception in Washington DC in the spring. At the reception, they'll have the opportunity to demo their app for tech industry leaders as well as members of Congress!



Superintendent's Perspective

There's no better time of year in the Point Pleasant School District than the holiday season. As we come into the holidays, the first marking period has come and gone and students and staff are typically settled in and focused on achievement and the remainder of the year. There's a feeling of accomplishment and contentment that can be felt district-wide, which lends itself well to the burgeoning holiday spirit that can be witnessed throughout the district.

The charitable endeavors heralded by our students and staff as well as the season's many events and traditions, truly makes this the most wonderful time of the year. It's one of my favorite times to visit our schools, when they are alive with the sound of music and the holiday excitement is almost palpable. The ability to witness the wonder of the holidays through the eyes of our students is a treasured gift.

This time of year is punctuated by winter concerts and holiday events; by food and toy drives for our neighbors in need; and by great reflection as we look back on the school year's first three months and the incredible achievements that have occurred over such a short time.

Whether in academics, athletics or the arts, our students are excelling in every area. Academic achievement remains high and our students continue to be recognized for both academic and co-curricular pursuits.

The fall athletic season was one of the most exciting in district history! From our Panthers Football team's incredible undefeated season that ended at the HighPoint Solutions Stadium at Rutgers University for the Central Group II finals to Devin Hart's incredible finish at the Foot Locker Cross Country National Championships earning him All-American status, this year has been one for the record books.

Our Performing Arts Department also continues to shine with extraordinary performances and achievement. Carrying on a Boro tradition, senior Matt Moran and Freshman Keith Reilly were chosen to join a select group of New Jersey's most elite high school musicians for the Algonquin Arts Theatre's 2017 Rising Stars Concert. And an impressive seven Boro students will perform at the 2018 All Shore Regional Chorus.

District teachers are also receiving well-deserved recognition for their efforts. Earlier this year, high school English teacher Shannon Orosz was named a 2017 New Jersey Exemplary Secondary Educator while math teacher Gerard Marrone has continued to demonstrate an inspiring commitment to becoming an exemplary, tech-savvy educator by earning his Level II Google Educator Certification as well as his Level I Flipped Learning Certification. Flipped Learning is an instructional strategy that reverses the traditional learning environment by delivering instructional content online outside of class and moving activities that have traditionally been considered homework into the classroom. Mr. Marrone and many other district educators continue to share their expertise with their colleagues in targeted professional development courses. And I'm pleased to announce that three district teachers have been asked to present at upcoming NJASA Techspo Conference, of the most widely attended technology conferences in the state. Nick Gattuso, Amy Hover, and Tina Monteleone have all been selected to present on best practices that yield high student engagement. Mr. Gattuso will focus on computer science programs and activities, Ms. Hover will focus on interactive technology that supports differentiated practices, and Ms. Monteleone will share ways to engage students in reading through a variety of apps and extensions.

But where this year has really stood out is through the charity and spirit of giving that has been demonstrated in our schools. The year began with a district-wide effort to support the recovery efforts from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Through a combination of donation receptacles placed at strategic locations and events, a staff 'Jeans Day' fundraiser, and donations from the district's affiliated organizations, we raised over \$3,000 to support the One America Appeal!

For the tenth consecutive year, all four district schools worked to make the holidays brighter for area families in need by participating in the Annual Students Change Hunger Holiday Food Drive competition, raising literal tons of food. Our schools also coordinated pajama, toy and gift, and coat drives for those in need. And Memorial Middle School celebrated their 22nd year of participation in the St. Jude's Math-a-Thon!

As you can see, here in the Point Pleasant School District, it really is the most wonderful time of the year! Thank you for your continued support.

From the Point Pleasant School District family to your family, I offer our best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a safe, happy and healthy New Year!



Vincent S. Smith
Superintendent of Schools

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The Panther Press

Volume 17, Number 2

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Point Pleasant Borough 2017 Board of Education

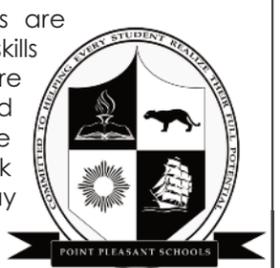
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Mission Statement

To assure that all students are equipped with the essential skills necessary to acquire knowledge and understanding; to instill the desire to question and look for truth so that students may become critical thinkers and life-long learners; and, to assure that all students practice self-discipline, perseverance, fairness, and judicious decision making.



It is the expectation of this school district that all pupils achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at all grade levels.

Devin Hart achieves All-American status

Point Pleasant Borough Schools' comprehensive athletic programs are a source of great district pride. When the district's student-athletes strive to achieve their personal best, individually or as members of a team, they elicit honor and recognition for the district, while promoting Panther Pride throughout the greater Point Pleasant community.

Each year, numerous student-athletes from Point Pleasant Schools earn awards of distinction and acclaim from local, regional and state athletic organizations while a select few are fortunate enough to sign National Letters of Intent, committing them to play their designated sport at Division I, II and III colleges.

Every few years, however, there's one student-athlete that rises above the pack, someone whose level of achievement breaks district records and creates a legacy of success that lasts the district generations. Among the world class athletes to hail from Point Pleasant Schools are three-time Olympic Gold Medalist and two-time FIFA Women's World Cup Champion Christie Pearce Rampone, famed professional wrestler Page Falkinburg, also known as Diamond Dallas Page, the NFL's Ryan Malleck, who has been signed to the NY Giants, the Baltimore Ravens and most recently to the practice team of the Houston Texans and Kelly Hughes who is currently playing women's basketball for German professional team, Freiburg. Most recently, however, the student-athlete that's been making Point Pleasant Borough history is 17-year old running wunderkind Devin Hart.

"In the Point Pleasant School District, the name Devin Hart has become synonymous with running excellence," said Superintendent of Schools Vincent S. Smith. "Since his freshman year, he has consistently been one of the top runners on the cross country and winter and spring track teams. This year, however, has been simply stellar, with

Devin achieving All American status ranking him as one of the country's top high school runners."

Devin began racking up the running achievements when he was just a freshman. In the fall of his freshman year, he was a standout member of the Class B South Division Championship-winning Panthers Cross Country Team, earning spots on All Group, All Shore Conference, All County and All Division Teams. He was the Winter Track MVP and in spring he made the Third Team, All Group II for the 3,200 M!

As a sophomore, Devin was instrumental to the Cross Country Team's undefeated season, helping them again earn the divisional title and securing himself a number of individual awards and accolades, including Team MVP, All Shore Conference, and Group II All State. He was also the Group II State Championship Runner Up, the Ocean County Cross Country Championship Winner and the South Central Group II Champion. During the Winter season, Devin was named the Group II 3,200 M Champion while in Spring he made Third Team, All Group II for the 3,200 M for the second consecutive year.

This year, however, has been one for the record books! In October, he placed first in the Ocean County Championships. November brought a trifecta of NJSIAA achievement with Devin placing first in the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association's Central Jersey Sectional Meet, Group II Meet and the Meet of Champions.

Also in November, Devin competed in the Northeast Region Race, where he finished sixth, qualifying him for the Foot Locker Cross Country National Championships in San Diego. Hart and 39 of the nation's very best high



All-American Devin Hart at NJSIAA Sectionals [Photo courtesy: Larry Murphy | For NJ Advance Media]

school runners – the top 10 runners from four regional competitions – convened at Balboa Park in San Diego, California on Dec. 9 to run in the 5K race. Finishing at 15:45, Devin came in 10th, cementing his status as an All-American.

In addition, Devin was also named NJ.com Runner of the Year, All State, All Group II, and the Shore Conference Cross Country Runner of the Year. And with part of the winter track season, the spring track season and his whole senior year still ahead of him, Devin is poised to earn even more awards and accolades.

"Devin Hart's running talent is undeniable but in addition to being an outstanding athlete, he's also an excellent student, currently ranked first in his class," said Superintendent Smith. "Devin exemplifies the correlation that exists between athletic performance and athletic achievement. I for one cannot wait to see what his future holds."