

Green Brook Township Public Schools

Schools of Excellence

OUTSTANDING TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL SPECIALISTS OF THE YEAR

This year, the New Jersey Department of Education announced a new program: the Governor's Award for Outstanding Educator of the Year. This new celebratory program integrates the Teacher of the Year Program with the Governor's Teacher/Educational Services Professional Recognition Program to continue to recognize the state's best teachers and educational services professionals. Irene E. Feldkirchner (IEF) Elementary School and the Green Brook Middle School has nominated staff members for this prestigious award: Mrs. Michelle Larsen and Ms. Christine Wetzel – Governor's Teacher of the Year nominees, and Mrs. Shaune Casazza and Dr. Emilia Muglia– Governor's Educational Services Professional of the Year nominees.

The Governor's Outstanding Teacher nominee from IEF School is Mrs. Michelle Larsen. Mrs. Larsen is in her fifteenth year of teaching at IEF School. She has served as first grade teacher for twelve years, and she has been a second grade teacher for the past three years. Mrs. Larsen is a graduate of Lycoming College, PA where she graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Theater and Elementary Education. She holds a State of New Jersey Certificate as an Elementary School Teacher (K-5).

Along with the fine work Mrs. Larsen does in the classroom, she is also a contributor to the school community at large. She is the Teacher/Advisor to the IEF Student Council/the CLUB; she presents at parent and teacher workshops; and she is a member of the School Improvement Panel. She also serves on district level committees: Professional Development and the District Evaluation Advisory Council. Mrs. Larsen's outstanding work at IEF School makes her a fitting nominee for the Governor's Teacher of the Year award.

The Governor's Outstanding Educational Specialist nominee from IEF School is Mrs. Shaune Casazza – Guidance Counselor. Mrs. Casazza is in her fifth year serving as Guidance Counselor at IEF School. She is a graduate of Kean University where she attained her Master's Degree in School Counseling. She was nominated for the Kean Honor Society. Mrs. Casazza holds State of New Jersey Certification as a School Counselor (K-12) and as an Elementary School Teacher (K-8).



Dr. Muglia & Ms. Wetzel

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Mrs. Larsen, Mr. Lamberti, & Mrs. Casazza

Camp P.A.W.S. is BROADWAY BOUND!

The theme for this summer at Camp P.A.W.S. (Personalized, Academic, Workplace readiness, and Social skills) is "Broadway"! The program runs from July 6 to August 13, Monday through Thursday from 8:00AM—12:00PM. Students from prekindergarten to eighth grade are invited to read, write, dance, sing, and more at Irene E. Feldkirchner Elementary School.



District Newsletter

MARCH 2015

A New Era of Coordination and Cooperation

For many years, Green Brook has enjoyed a good relationship with its fellow sending districts, Watchung, Warren, and Long Hill and the high school, Watchung Hills; however it has always been difficult to find the time to fully take advantage of having sister schools feeding into one high school. Some success was found in organizing meetings between all the superintendents, principals, and supervisors, and there has been a system in place for some content area teachers to join together for articulation at the high school. Now, the sending districts and high school have established cooperation and coordination as a priority and teachers are seeing the benefits.

High school articulation meetings now invite more content area teachers to attend each session, and have added time for teachers to observe classes, speak to colleagues about best practices, share effective resources, and hear from high school teachers about expectations they have for students. Through this increased observation time, teachers are better able to see how best to prepare their students for the high school and beyond. Supervisors, principals, and superintendents have committed to monthly meetings in which they can discuss issues facing their districts and improve opportunities for teachers, parents, and students to better understand programs and expectations from the state.

The sending districts are also working on coordinating professional development efforts for teachers. On the October in-service date, each district hosted a different content area to provide a forum for those teachers to come together and discuss issues related to their particular needs. Green Brook, for instance, hosted all of the Physical Education and Health teachers from the sending districts to discuss curricular issues as well as their expectations for students. At the January in-service, each of the sending districts were invited to send teachers and administrators to Green Brook University to participate in a cadre of classes. Likewise, Green Brook teachers have been invited to the high school and sending districts for similar opportunities, including seeing a presenter from the New Jersey Department of Education at Watchung Hills in February. This pooling of resources and knowledge will lead to better opportunities for teachers and overall a better education for our students.



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Along with her role as Guidance Counselor at IEF School, Mrs. Casazza is also the school-based testing coordinator, Anti-Bullying Specialist, Teacher of Character Education (K-4), Facilitator of Social Skills Groups, and Chair of the I&RS/504 Committees. She also assists the Principal in a number of school-related matters – including character education. Mrs. Casazza's outstanding work at IEF School makes her a fitting nominee for the Governor's Educational Specialist of the Year award.

Green Brook Middle School has nominated two staff members for the Governor's Outstanding Teacher/Educational Services Professional Recognition Program: Ms. Christine Wetzel – Governor's Teacher of the Year nominee, and Dr. Emilia Muglia – Governor's Educational Services Professional of the Year nominee.

Ms. Wetzel is in her 8th year working for Green Brook Township Public Schools as a 6th-8th grade math teacher. Ms. Wetzel is a graduate of Rutgers University with a B.A. and M.A in Mathematics Education. Over the years, she has shown her versatility in working with students of varying ability levels, supporting special needs students to progress further as well as pushing advanced students to succeed. She serves on several district committees, lending her expertise to areas such as professional development and teacher evaluation through the SciP and DEAC, and curriculum concerns.

Dr. Muglia is in her 38th year in education. Four years were spent outside of the district. She has been in her current position as the School Psychologist in the district for 23 years and prior to that she was the remedial reading teacher/reading specialist in the district for 10 years. Dr. Muglia is a graduate of Kean University with B.A. in Elementary Education/Reading Teacher and M.A. as a Reading Specialist. She received her doctorate from Seton Hall University. She keeps current in her knowledge by participating in Professional Peer Groups and engaging in research in the field. She coordinates the Child Study Team and works to assure compliance while maintaining a collaborative approach to developing programs for students. In addition, she works with colleagues to assist in furthering ideas and programs around special education students' needs.

GBTPS Learning and Activities this Winter

IEF students participated in the Hour of Code. The students got to learn the basics of computer programming while having fun! All the students were actively engaged and interested in learning more about computer programming.

Grade 8 students had a guest professional artist, Mrs. Sande Bencoter, come in to present her artwork and discuss art as a career. She also instructed students on how to create a box out of ceramic clay. Her artwork has been in numerous galleries/museums and published in many books. Her specialty is sculpture working in ceramic clay.



The Green Brook Education and Athletics Foundation granted funding in excess of \$6,000 for a Traverse Wall to be installed in the IEF School Gym. The traverse wall will be yet another fantastic opportunity for our children to hone skills in the hallmark areas of our physical education program: strength, stamina and agility.



GBMS actors performed A Modern Christmas Carol, which is a spin on the classic story. Instead of being set in England in the 1800s, the story took place in a modern day middle school, with Ebeneza Stone being the main character instead of Ebenezer Scrooge.

IEF held a week-long multicultural event, which include student grade-level projects "Learning About Our Countries", food tasting, cultural literature, cultural artwork, cultural songs, and culturally specific games that the students participated in during Physical Education classes.



GBMS participated in a variety of activities to help promote anti-bullying in our schools. Students, teachers, and staff held spirit days, which included crazy hat, crazy socks, crazy hair and white-out day. The Second Annual Chili Cook Off had teachers and administrators competing for student votes for the best of the best chili. To conclude our White-Out Bullying, the annual Student/Faculty Basketball Game was played. 8th grade boys and girls basketball team members versus the faculty. The game was a thriller with the students edging the faculty by a score of 79-78 in a double overtime thriller.

Fourth Grade students are getting ready for their mock trials in May. Students have assembled their groups and are working collaboratively together to write their trial scripts. The mock trial will be presented at IEF later this spring.

Teachers and administrators put on a fashion show for the students in each school to support the GBEAF "Shop Smart. Do Good" fundraiser!



2015-2016 School Budget

The Green Brook Township Board of Education approved the submission of the 2015-2016 School Budget:

<u>Revenues</u>		<u>Expenditures</u>	
Transfer from other funds	\$ 750,000	General Expense	\$ 22,336,880
Tax Levy for Current Exp.	\$ 20,070,974	Federal Projects	\$ 266,472
State Aid	\$ 1,138,072	Debt Service	\$ 1,506,575
Misc. & Federal Sources	\$ 643,306		
Debt Service	\$ 1,506,575		
TOTAL	\$ 24,108,927	TOTAL	\$ 24,108,927

This budget has a 0.5% increase in the local tax levy. This increase was necessary to offset increases in:

- Employee salaries based on the negotiated agreement
- Health benefit costs even with employees at the top tier of contributions for their benefits
- Utilities (gas, electric, water, sewer)
- High school tuition costs
- Debt service from 2005 and 2010 referendum projects

Building rationales for each budget item allowed a reallocation of funds so new staff, programs, and equipment will be available next year:

- Reinstating the vocal and instrumental program at IEF for all grades at IEF.
- Making half time special area positions full time so that students will be supported in and out of the classroom with cross curricular instruction, literacy, basic skills, enrichment, advanced math, and gifted and talented opportunities.
- Splitting the Spanish/Music position into two full time positions, which will allow more choice for middle school students.
- Adding 1.5 maintenance/custodial positions so the facilities are closer to the State guideline for staffing the district.
- Redeploying current technology devices (iPads, Chromebooks) and adding new devices (Chromebooks) so students and teachers have more access to the tools they need.
- Increased professional development opportunities for teachers and staff so they can continue to better serve the students.
- A new 54 passenger school bus to replace a vehicle that must be retired based on State law.

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Achievement, Empowerment, Inspiration, Opportunity, Unity for Every Child