



# President's Message



Dear Neighbor,

There are so many amazing things going on this fall that it is hard to list them all.

The school year kicked off with students making their way to new classes with the anticipation of learning, meeting new friends, and participating in sporting, musical, and theatrical events, as well as clubs and all our high schools have to offer. We encourage everyone to stay connected with all the activities in our schools and attending the many great curricular, extracurricular, and athletic events happening through our schools.

One of our key roles as board members is to set the goals for the upcoming school year. We do this to support our amazing administration and staff members as they work tirelessly to prepare our students for the next chapter of their lives.

We keep the mission and vision of our district in mind in all that we do. Our vision is to create a culture of innovation, inquiry, and individuality that promotes achievement and choice by cultivating the skills needed to compete and collaborate as ethical and responsible global citizens. Our mission is to prepare students for successful college and/or career experiences with the needed mindset, skills, structures, and knowledge to accomplish that goal.

As a board, we have set exciting goals to enhance communication among teachers, administrators, students, and the community that expand learning. District goals this year are designed to advance inclusivity and equity throughout the district, expand institutional awareness, establish stronger connections with marginalized groups, and engage students and regional partners. Additionally, they provide for expanding the district's efforts to create authentic, real-world learning experiences for students and fostering a more regional approach to "student wellness" and establish a plan on how to realize that vision.

To that end, the board is refining methods of internal communications between the Board of Education and the superintendent, investigating improvements to the current Pascack Schedule that might provide students with additional curricular opportunities, and developing consistent regulations and policies regarding athletic and co-curricular booster organizations.

Specifically, we are prioritizing our focus on real-world, authentic learning opportunities by increasing internships and work learning activities; identifying innovative ways to use technology in learning; helping students, through initiatives and learning activities, to develop the "people skills" needed to succeed in today's workplace; and continuing to support emotional health and wellness through our school wellness centers and student outreach. We continue to support student learning outside the classroom locally and abroad, in an effort to enhance opportunities for our students to grow personally and educationally.

We appreciate your continued support and hope to see you at upcoming district events.

Sincerely,

Tammy Molinelli

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## districtcalendar

**December**

- 4 World Language Honor Society Induction, PH, 7 pm, Auditorium
- 10 PFO Meeting, PV, 7 pm, Media Center
- 11 Winter Concert, PH, 7 pm, Auditorium
- 12 Holiday Concert, PV, 7 pm, Auditorium
- 18 Tri-M Honor Society Induction, PV, 7 pm, Auditorium
- 19 PFO Meeting, PV, Media Center, 7 pm
- 20 **Noon Dismissal** for Winter Recess through January 1 - Schools Closed

**January 2020**

- 2 Schools Re-Open
- 13 PFA Meeting, PH, 9 am, Second Floor Conference Room
- 20 Martin Luther King Day  
Schools Closed for Students, District Professional Day

For information, call 201-358-7020 (PH) or 201-358-7060 (PV).

**BOARD MEETINGS**

December	January
9 Regular	6 Regular/Reorganization
	27 Regular

Meetings are held in the Pascack Hills High School Auditorium, 225 West Grand Avenue, Montvale, NJ, at 7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted. The public is encouraged to attend.



### Bergen County Teacher of the Year

Valley teacher Leah Jerome has a huge presence in and out of the classroom, earning recognition as this year's Bergen County Teacher of the Year. Educating students in history at the honors and advanced placement levels while immersing herself in campus culture by coaching sports teams and advising clubs, the beloved teacher is co-advisor to the One Spirit club,

which educates students about Native American history in preparation for a trip to South Dakota reservations to learn about being Native American in the 21st century.

Recipient of the James Madison Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2013, Ms. Jerome also participated in the Georgetown University Summer Institute Program for Constitutional Studies. With Bachelor of Arts and Master of Science degrees from Fordham University, she is currently pursuing a Master of Arts and Letters degree from Drew University and maintains Advanced Placement College Board Teacher certification.

Ms. Jerome's teacher of the year achievements render the district the first and only one to have two Bergen County teachers of the year in the last twenty years, with school music teacher Argine Safari earning the distinction in 2016.

"The community of incredible, dedicated educators here make the district an ideal place in which to grow," says Leah Jerome of her experience.

## Inclusivity Results Are In

Analysis of the survey given to parents and students last spring designed to assist in better understanding the educational climate for students reveals an overall positive school culture, and that the extent in which all students feel included in the school community should be considered moving forward.

To that end, the Board of Education has established a goal to advance inclusivity and equity throughout the district, to be accomplished by expanding institutional awareness, establishing stronger connections with marginalized groups, and engaging students and regional partners.

Activities for students include the state-wide "Week of Respect" in the fall, in which the district provides messaging about respecting people in terms of difference and disagreement to learn more about students' perspectives on inclusivity. Staff members will partner with organizations and experts, including the Anti-Defamation League and the New Jersey Consortium for Excellence and Equality, for professional development regarding inclusivity. For the community, Unity in the Valley, a collaborative effort led by local municipalities and supported by the district, aims to build on the message of inclusivity.

The district will communicate further information as it is available and issue a follow-up climate survey to determine progress. ■



Photo Credit: Gerd Attman from Pixabay

## Outstanding Scholarship Indeed

Valley seniors Rachel Lee and Isabella Tjan join with principal Thomas DeMaio in recognition of becoming semifinalists in the 2020 National Merit® Scholarship program. They have the opportunity to compete for scholarships worth more than \$31 million offered in the spring.



Meredith Tipping and Michael Alpert, Valley seniors, stand proudly with principal Thomas DeMaio upon achieving Commended status in the National Merit Scholarship program.



Congratulations to Pascack Hills students who achieved National Merit and/or Advanced Placement Scholar. Pictured from left to right, top row: Emma Leipsner (AP\*), Hallie Wikfors (AP\*), Varun Gowthaman (AP), Suha Niyas (AP\*), Glenn deMarrais, principal, Beck Kerdman (AP), Ria Sah (AP), Leonard Wang (NM), Kaia Paulsen (AP), Jared Solon (NM & AP\*) Seated left to right Oliver Fishel (AP), Jade Siegel (AP), Miranda Luo (NM & AP+), Sydney Schair (NM & AP), Sean Sheikowitz (AP), Matthew Hong (AP) Not pictured: Samuel Eichner (NM & AP).

\* with Honor, + with Distinction



Valley seniors ranked as Advanced Placement scholars for top test scores include, back row, Edward Mercurio, Ashley Shaaf, Melissa Jennings, Olivia Jones, Alexander Belgiovine, Oren Roznitsky, Tanner Marshall, Glendon Chin, and Jonathan Fan with principal Thomas DeMaio. In front are Rachel Lee, Kelsey Hagen, Meredith Tipping, Miranda Rack, Kathleen Gifford, and Ellen An.

## Meet New Faculty Members



*Danielle deQuintal, Valley Technical Education Teacher*



*Dana Amato, Valley Physical Education/Health Teacher*



*Michael Mattis,  
part-time Park  
Academy Physical  
Education Teacher*



*Jennifer Kuo, Valley School Counselor*



*Ronald Villone, III,  
Valley Physical  
Education/Health  
Teacher*



*Tara Wholey, part-time Hills School Nurse*



*Dana Siletski, part-time Hills Speech Language Specialist*



*Mary Petrovici, interim Park Academy Coordinator*

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Prepared by Written Communiqué

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**Upgrading Facilities**



*Hills' newly resurfaced parking lot provides a smooth ride for visitors, students, and faculty.*

Both Hills and Valley campuses are markedly improved, with several projects complete and others in progress.

At Hills, the existing parking lot, shown above, has been milled, resurfaced, and striped, with concrete curbs on the perimeter. The

entire D wing has been air-conditioned with the installation of new equipment. Two toilet rooms have been renovated for handicap access, and new curbing was installed on one side of the path to the upper field to prevent erosion and clogging of storm drains.

Meanwhile, at Valley, band, choral music, offices, and practice room offices are being renovated to provide facilities that meet current curriculum and program needs. In the dance studio and weight room mercury-contaminated flooring is abated, and new flooring is installed. A new enclosure including a new retaining wall and a new fence with a gate at the perimeter is created for the upcoming beekeeping program, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony set for Earth Day 2020.

At both schools, interior door hardware is replaced, with all classrooms having a push-button lock on the inside for quick and easy locking in an emergency, while door keys are replaced with a tiered keying system. ■