

# Report Card Narratives

## New Jersey Department of Education

Hillside Board of Education (39-2190)

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The Hillside Public School District, located in Union County, New Jersey is a vibrant pre-K-12 district with approximately 3,100 students, enrolled in four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. We strive to see that every student is ready for their college or career experience in the future. We fulfill this mission by ensuring that children are presented with lessons, appropriate to their age and capabilities that extend and challenge student thinking. To this end, all other activities are secondary and ALL decisions are made with the best interests of our students in mind.

The Hillside Public School District is committed to offering students an exceptional educational experience, in safe, secure buildings with outstanding teachers. To that end, we have incorporated Project Read and benchmark assessments in grades K – 2 to gauge student progress towards becoming fluent readers and critical thinkers by third grade. Student progress in literacy and numeracy will be assessed throughout the year using Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS). We have reintroduced handwriting in the 3rd grade; revised our Science, Mathematics and Technology curricula in grades 6-12 to provide students with more rigorous academic experiences. We are excited to incorporate Project Lead the Way (PLTW) at the middle and high school levels to enhance the STEM initiative. Project Lead the Way (PLTW) empowers students to develop and apply, transportable skills by exploring real-world challenges. Students not only learn technical skills, but also learn to solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate. (PLTW.org, 2016).

With the national emphasis on STEM, the Hillside Public School District is excited to announce the implementation of the district's 1:1 Chromebook initiative in grades 6-12, which means that every student in the middle and high school will receive a Chromebook to enhance the delivery of instruction by giving students access to new people, new ideas and opportunities to investigate new perspectives around the globe. We are committed to ensuring that our students are equipped with the latest technological tools to enhance the learning environment in the classroom and beyond. Teachers will play an integral role in the effective use of the technology by engaging in continuous professional growth and development; and by investigating instructional best practices on how to activate student curiosity.

Effective teachers are a critical component to student success and their professional

development is important to improving student outcomes. Our teachers are active participants in the Partnership for Systemic Change with neighboring school districts. One hundred teachers participated in summer training to build their knowledge of and capacity around the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The workshop series introduced teachers to authentic science investigations, using practices and cross-cutting concepts that allow for deeper understanding of the disciplinary core ideas in science.

Along with redesigning our instructional focus, Hillside Public Schools is undergoing an amazing facilities upgrade. By the Spring of 2017, George Washington Elementary School will be expanded to include four new state of the art classrooms and a gymnasium. The redesigned facility will house our 7th & 8th grade students from Walter O. Krumbiegel Middle School. The upgraded facilities will help us achieve the goal of our classrooms becoming laboratories for student success, in which they can engage in hands-on, minds-on experiential learning activities.

As a part of a close-knit community, we have established an active Community Relations Committee with the Hillside Police Department, whose members work closely with our public schools in the areas of safety and literacy.

The Ready, Set, Grow! mentoring initiative, led by vested members of the school community will help inspire our middle and high school students to achieve their goals and aspirations by developing critical interpersonal skills that will help them not only land a job, but also build a successful career. The initiative includes:

- Ensuring that leadership programs better serve males and females and their academic and social development
- Reducing the disproportionate number who are absent, suspended, expelled, or placed inappropriately in special education classes
- Establishing data and establishing protocols to monitor the progress of the students and intervene at the earliest signs of problems
- Encouraging a high school to college and career strategy for improving the life outcomes of the young people.

Plans are currently in development for a Junior Police Academy that will focus on forensic science and crime scene investigations.

Walter O. Krumbiegel also partners with Kean University through a program called KULA (Kean University Learning Adventures). Through KULA, students are exposed to the college experience while participating in co-curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences. The KULA experience is another opportunity to prepare our students for college and career.

Through our monthly "Ask the Superintendent" and parent surveys, we seek to involve our parents and guardians as partners in the education process by soliciting their feedback on educational initiatives and their expertise in helping to shape the minds of our future leaders.

As we embark on the academic year, we have established our theme of Ready, Set, Excel!, by which all community stakeholders have embraced the idea of excellence in education through meaningful challenging experiences for our students.

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