



Superintendent's Report

January 7, 2026

happy new year

I congratulate our re-elected Board members, Janine Micera, Gal Paldi, and Gregory Shi, and our newly elected Board member, Avishag Ravid, who were sworn in this evening. Thank you for your service to our school district and the Closter community!

Congratulations to our music teachers, Ms. Pidi, Ms. Abbey, and Ms. Riecken, and our student musicians for their amazing performances in December! The Fourth Grade Chorus and Instrumental Ensemble presented a winter concert and cheered everyone's spirit with their songs of the season. Tenakill Middle School presented its magnificent winter concert with impressive performances by the chorus, band, and orchestra. Thank you to all for sharing your talents with the community.

During the month of January, students in grades two through eight will be taking the mid-year LinkIt! Assessment in language arts and mathematics. Students in grades K-3 are participating in literacy screening assessments to monitor their progress. Students in grades five through eight will also take a mid-year science assessment. The assessments provide teachers with information about how students are progressing toward grade-level standards. If you have any questions about any of the assessments, please get in touch with Ms. Zanin at Hillside Elementary School or Mr. McElroy at Tenakill Middle School.

Kudos to PreK teacher, Josephine Hunt, for her recent appearance on CNN on January 2, 2026, during the morning news. She spoke about the impact of social media and screen time on children's mental health. Last year, Ms. Hunt led a teacher book study on *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt and has presented on this topic at the NJEA Teacher Convention in November 2025. I commend her commitment to raising awareness about the importance of collaboration between schools and families to help reduce student anxiety.

I am pleased to report that we are making steady progress toward our 2025-2026 district goals. A committee of administrators and teachers is scheduled to begin meeting on February 3, 2026, to develop grade-band rubrics aligned to the *Profile of a Closter Learner*, with drafts for PreK-2, 3-5, and 6-8 to be shared with principals and teachers for feedback and refinement. In addition, teachers at both schools continue to work toward the goal of completing five hours of professional development focused on student data analysis through ongoing review of NJSLA, LinkIt, Aimsweb, and other assessment data, with further learning planned during the January 19, 2026, professional development day. Finally, principals, in collaboration with school counselors, are actively gathering feedback on character education programs at each school, having already collected faculty input and through scheduled Principal Advisory Committee discussions this month to inform next steps.

Closter Public Schools will be closed for students on Monday, January 19, 2026, which is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The faculty and staff will participate in professional development on that day.

We are excited to celebrate Lunar New Year on Friday, January 30, 2026. This celebration will occur at both schools with an exciting and educational assembly featuring our students. More information will be forthcoming.

Vincent Mc Hale