



Superintendent's Report

March 5, 2025

Our Pre-K and Kindergarten registration for the 2025-2026 school year is underway. All information is on our district website, www.ClosterSchools.org. The link for each is on the main page – the first and second banners on the right side, entitled, Kindergarten Registration 2025-2026 and Pre-K Application 2025-2026. If you have questions about Pre-K registration, please call Ms. Lynn Dubert, 201-768-3001, ext. 41119. If you have questions about Kindergarten registration, please call Ms. Cheryl Boehm, 201-768-3001, ext. 41118.

On Tuesday, March 4, 2025, our Board attorney, Stephen Fogarty, conducted an HIB (Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying) training for administrators and our Anti-Bullying Specialists. This training focused on procedures, timelines, and interpreting the law related to the definition of HIB in New Jersey. Mr. Fogarty also shared a case law update. This training was quite helpful in ensuring that we are implementing the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights appropriately and effectively in our schools.

District Goals Update

The *Profile of a Closter Learner* Committee met on Wednesday, February 26, continuing the work on one of our district goals for this school year. The committee has eleven people, including representative parents, teachers, and administrators. The committee reviewed the highest-rated responses from the January *ThoughtExchange* and started to draft statements defining the skills and qualities students should have after completing 8th grade in our district. By May 2025, we will present a draft iconographic and narrative for the Profile of a Closter Learner to the Board for review and approval. Team members have shared that they find this important work extremely valuable and are honored to be serving. The committee is meeting again tomorrow, March 6, and on March 20, 2025. I will keep you updated on our progress.

The goal to improve counseling for transition from middle school to high school has been met. The school counselors and Ms. Cipollini have improved services and communication in various ways. They held a Preparing for HS student assembly in October 2024, had a student information table during lunch for students to ask questions about HS, held a Preparing for HS parent information session in November 2024, eighth grade students went to Northern Valley Demarest (NVD) to learn about electives, held a HS Scheduling and Placement Information session for parents in January 2025, and arranged NVD Scheduling Conferences with students and their parents. In addition, the Tenakill Times Newsletter included a Counselor's Corner section to include important information about the transition to high school. Our special services department also held a Transition Process meeting for parents, a Special Education Meeting at NVD for parents to learn about special education programs offered at NVD, a SEPAG meeting to learn about the middle to high school transition for special education students, and held transition meetings in February 2025 for parents and students to meet with the NVD school counselor and the HS case manager. Even though this goal has been technically met, they will continue to keep students and parents well-informed about the transition process from now through the end of the school year.

Teams at Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School have been working on the district goal of expanding student advocacy at each school. The principals will provide an update on their school's progress toward this goal during their principal reports on March 19, 2025.

PTO News

Join the PTO and Mathnasium for Math Night on Wednesday, March 12, at 5:30 p.m. at Hillside Elementary School. It will be a fun night of math activities, rewards, and giveaways for the whole family!

The Porchlight Production of Alice in Wonderland will be presented on March 15, at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Their production of Lion King, Jr. will be on April 5, at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Both productions will be performed at Tenakill Middle School. Tickets are \$10 each. Please come and support our performing artists!

The Closter PTO will host their annual gala on Friday, March 21, 2025, from 7:00 a.m. to 11 pm at the Edgewood Country Club in River Vale. The theme is Viva Las Vegas. Tickets are available on the [Closter PTO webpage](#).

Our administration and the Board Finance and Physical Plant Committee have dedicated significant time in recent months to develop the preliminary budget for 2025-2026, which Floro Villanueva Jr. will present tonight. This budget preserves all student programs and maintains our facilities while considering the impact on taxpayers. I appreciate Floro Villanueva's exceptional leadership in this process and commend the Board Finance and Physical Plant Committee for their hard work in ensuring our students receive a high-quality education in safe, modern facilities with adequate resources. Once the Board approves our preliminary budget, we will send it to the Executive County Superintendent for approval. The final budget public hearing will be held during our Board of Education meeting on April 30, 2025.

The school district will have a single session day on Monday, March 24, 2025, so our faculty and staff can participate in professional learning led by the Northern Valley Curriculum Center.

Vincent Mc Hale