Superintendent’s Message

Dear Members of our School Community,

We are excited to welcome the beautiful weather of spring as we work through a successful school year. I proudly present this latest publication of “Pride in our Schools” that highlights the achievements of our students, new initiatives, and the current status of our outstanding school district.

As you peruse this publication, you will read that this has been an exciting school year to date inclusive of our students’ remarkable academic achievements, athletic achievements, and community service outreach endeavors. We welcomed our new Board of School Directors in December, and we follow their lead in forging new partnerships with the amazing resources of our community in addition to seeking connections between these partnerships and our K-12 curricula. As we work towards completing this successful school year, we are also diligently planning new educational initiatives for the upcoming 2012-2013 school year. I look forward to sharing more on these initiatives in the near future.

Please remember that I maintain an open door policy and welcome you to contact me if I may assist you in any way. I hope you enjoy a wonderful Spring Break followed by all of our end of the school year endeavors to complete this successful school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti, Ed.D.
Superintendent

New Hope-Solebury School District Wins National Transparency Award

The Board of School Directors in the New Hope-Solebury School District is honored and proud to announce that the school district is one of only six school districts in Pennsylvania to receive a Sunny Award from the Sunshine Review. According to Michael Barnhart who is President of the Sunshine Review “The Sunny Award recognizes governments that are doing an exemplary job at proactively disclosing information to taxpayers. We at Sunshine Review are proud to acknowledge those who are doing it right and setting a transparency standard that all governments can, and should, meet.”

The New Hope-Solebury School District was selected as one of only six awarded in Pennsylvania and one of only 214 awarded across the nation from over 6,000 government websites each being graded on a transparency checklist. This is the third annual Sunny Awards presentation.

According to Superintendent, Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti, “The New Hope-Solebury School District is proud and honored to be notified of being a recipient of a Sunny Award from the Sunshine Review for transparency in disclosure of information. Our outstanding school district highly values the strong support of its community and we will continue our ongoing efforts in reference to transparency.” The school district is located in Bucks County and serves 1,600 students in four schools.

For more information, please visit www.nhsd.org and www.sunshinereview.org.
The period following the winter holidays provides an excellent opportunity for continuity and consistency in our academic programming. A mild winter thus far has aided faculty and students in this endeavor.

We always strive to have our Lower Elementary School be an exciting learning community and have established a wide variety of educational and entertaining programs and acts of volunteerism. **Artists in Residence, Martin Luther King Day of Service, Pennies and Pretzels for Patients, Character Counts, Cyber Club** and various musical assemblies by our high school and visiting area artists are examples of enrichment activities.

As Spring approaches, we are anticipating construction of our **Outdoor Learning Center**, supported by our **New Hope-Solebury Education Fund** in collaboration with students and staff from **Delaware Valley College**. We will also begin to explore our environment using technology such as iTouches, iPads, and digital photography to enhance our understanding of the world.

**Read Across America** provided opportunities for students to experience the joys of literature.

**Our Jump Rope for Heart** project is in full swing and will conclude in early March. We have learned a great deal about nutrition, exercise, teamwork, and helping others.

Our annual walk for the **March of Dimes** will be held on April 25, 2012. The one mile “fun run” will involve students, parents, and the community in raising money for the March of Dimes.

With the spring weather, we are anxiously looking forward to a variety of outdoor activities punctuated by our fabulous **Field Day** scheduled for Tuesday, June 5, 2012.

We expect our Lower Elementary School will continue to be a source of pride for all students, families, and our community. What a great place for our young students to learn and grow!
We have been so busy here at the UES! Here is a peek into some classroom and school happenings.

- We are all jumping our hearts out to raise money for the American Heart Association. Over the past several years, we have been a top contender in the country and are working hard to keep that spot! Way to go Mrs. Ortiz and Mr. DiTulio!
- Students are preparing for spring musicals. In addition, students are writing song lyrics. Rock on Ms. VanPraag, Mr. Sasala, and Mr. Wehr.
- Mr. Mannion is using technology to enhance art lessons. Macbooks, iPads, Doodle 4 Google, Google Sketch Up, and Eden World Builder.
- Students are engaged in several reading programs such as Reading for Ronald, Read Across America, and Reading Olympics. Thank you to Mrs. Riva, Mrs. Iannacone, and Mrs. Ferro.
- In the grade levels, we geared up for PSSA testing, practicing and motivating students for these high-stakes tests. We are also introducing the students to Study Island, a fun, interactive, and technology driven way to learn.
- There are activities coming to us with the Edible School Yard as we are getting ready for a spring harvest. Teachers have been doing some soil testing and some spring planting as well.
- Our school play, 101 Dalmatians, is coming live in May. We have great talent here under the direction of Ginny Brennan.
- In third grade, students completed nano-writing and authored their own stories. They had a visit from Edward Tulane, have been reading fairytales, and are exploring in the garden.

- In fourth grade, Invention Convention has students designing and displaying inventions as unique as ever. Students make invitations for the event and it is quite the show! Ecosystems are here! Yes, we have crickets, fish, and snails. Wetlands, deserts, mountains, and seas...what kind of creatures lurk in underground caverns or graze in grassy meadows? What do they eat? How does one animal affect another? These are the burning questions that are being discussed as part of the ecosystems study...stay tuned!
- In fifth grade, responsibility, respect, and perspective are words we hear often, but what exactly do they mean and how do they apply to our daily lives? Students discuss these very important questions during morning meeting, which opens the door to emulating and building good character. In RELA, they are perfecting their grammar, reading comprehension, and fluency skills. Online resources such as Google Docs and QUIA make learning fun and interactive. In writing, students are working hard to express themselves through creating books of poetry. They are also learning to respond, in greater depth, to literature and are currently reading Island of the Blue Dolphins, the award-winning book by Scott O’Dell. In science class, kids are discovering the fascinating relationship between “Land and Water” and use the science lab, a student favorite, in each and every science class. In social studies, our 5th graders are digging into slavery and the many injustices West African people faced in the new land of America.
Middle School — Mr. Charles M. Malone, Principal

* The 6th grade researched and created **mini museums** using artifacts from ancient history loaned to us from the University of Pennsylvania’s Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology Museum. To culminate this activity, we visited the museum and visited the ancient civilizations in our course of study. The students completed a scavenger hunt throughout the museum to tie together the artifacts and concepts we study.

* The 7th Grade is gearing up for their **Mine Field Trip** in March. 7th Grade Advisories have been engaged in viewing clips from *Invictus*. Not only are the lessons about humanity and race powerful for Advisory but it is a connection to the African Nations Unit of study in Social Studies class.

* The 8th Grade is getting ready for their class trip to **Historical Philadelphia**. This will certainly bring History Alive as they study the foundations of our government.

* 8th Grade Gifted Support Class “Future City” received “Honorable Mention” as one of the six of forty-two teams in the Philadelphia Regional Future City Competition for Middle Schools. Working to achieve was the result of a balance of rigorous virtual and physical model construction, essay writing, and team work.

* The Middle School **“Math Counts Team”** competed in the Bucks/Valley Forge Math Counts Regional.

* Abigale Joshi and Taylor Kruopas both won special recognition in the PA Liquor Control Board’s 2011/2012 Alcohol Awareness Poster Contest.

* MS Advisories were acknowledged by *Wrightslaw* for their efforts in writing to our troops as a Veteran’s Day activity.

* Student Council and Advisories are continuing their efforts in Service Initiatives by dedicating the month of March to raising funds for the March of Dimes.

* Bailey Hendricks, Emma McLaughlin, Marlena Panzica, Heather Shiel, and Caleb Shiel volunteered their time for the Martin Luther King Day of Service!

* Congratulations to Evan Patrohay who received official White House correspondence from President Barack Obama. President Obama responded to Evan’s persuasive essay!

* 8th Grader, Jessica Zimmerman, has a mosaic submission of the Phillies logo on display at the BCIU.

* Art Club has exhibited their work and writing in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Students are completing a mural, creating attire for the Recycled Fashion Shows, learning about Auguste Rodin, and the Mutter Museum while they animate/sculpt/draw/design as a response to what they have learned. Students will visit the museums in May.

* Center Stage Drama Club’s wonderful performance of *The Wizard of Oz* was well received by all who had the pleasure of attending! What talent in the MS!

* Our sports teams continue to be competitive as we model good sportsmanship!
High School — Mrs. Christina D. Lang, Principal

Congratulations to Andrew Connors on being selected for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association All State Wind Ensemble. This is the highest honor a high school musician can achieve in the state of Pennsylvania.

On February 4th, nine members of the NH-S National Honor Society visited residents at Pine Run Retirement Community. The students helped the residents have a fun game of indoor bowling. “Our students were terrific,” said advisor Sarah Reeder. “They did an amazing job interacting with the residents. We were very proud of them!

NH-S senior, Kevin Li, won first place in the Lincoln-Douglas Debate on February 3rd & 4th. The open debates were held at the Pennsbury High School in Fairless Hills where over 50 other schools competed.

Mr. Gonsiewski’s Democracy in America class and Mr. Giorgi’s Journalism class participated in a live video stream with Congressman Michael Fitzpatrick. The event was co-sponsored by the Bucks County Intermediate Unit and Kids Voting. High school students throughout the county had prepared questions for Congressman Fitzpatrick on topics such as military, economy, health care, and foreign affairs.

Meghan Wilson was presented a soccer award as an All-American, All-Region II player. Meghan accepted the award from her coach, Chris Shank, along with the Athletic Director, Ted Harrington, and Principal Christina Lang. Her parents were by her side as the award was presented to her.

Seniors Kevin Li and Samuel Present have advanced to Finalist standing in the National Merit Scholarship Program. They will each now be considered for the National Merit Scholarships offered in the spring of 2012.

For two weeks in a row, the New Hope-Solebury High School Cheerleaders have placed second in area competitions! On January 28th, they placed second in the Central Bucks West Cheerleading Classic competition, and on February 4th they placed second in the Bicentennial Athletic League competition.

Surrounded by family, coaches, teammates, and friends, NH-S senior, Julian Kaminoff, signed a letter of intent today to play football at Division I, University of Massachusetts<http://www.umassathletics.com/sports/m-footbl/umas-m-footbl-body-main.html>, next year. Julian has been a free safety and kick returner for the NH-S football team.

On March 17th, the NH-S Odyssey of the Mind team won first place at the Southeastern Regionals. Out of 160 teams, they were also one of only two teams who were honored with the Ranatra Fusca award for exceptional creativity. The team will now move on to the state competition next month.
Pupil Services — Mr. David S. Lieberman, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services

Transitioning to the next school....

Getting ready to transition your child with an IEP, GIEP, 504 plan, or IHP between schools? Although you and your child may have grown quite comfortable with your current school, the staff, the way things work, and the thought of changing buildings may make you a bit nervous. Fear not! Very soon you will be contacted to schedule a transitional meeting with staff from both the sending and receiving schools. If you are the parent of a student with an IEP, GIEP, 504 plan, or an Individual Health Plan (IHP), then you should know that we are currently meeting with “job alike” staff to begin smoothly transitioning your children to their next school building. Special education teachers, gifted education teachers, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, nurses, speech specialists, and principals are all meeting to exchange information that will enable your child to enter their next school as seamlessly as possible. Please know that our staff is committed to making your child’s transition a success. If you have any questions, know that we are all here to answer your inquiry about the upcoming transition.

Curriculum Office—Dr. Elliott H. Lewis, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development

Curriculum Advisory Committee: At the direction of the Board of School Directors, a Curriculum Advisory Committee has been established. The Curriculum Advisory Committee will support the School Board in establishing educational goals for the children of the New Hope-Solebury School District and governing a program of education, or curriculum, designed to meet those goals. The Committee will respectfully consider the opinions of parents, teachers, students, school administration, and the local community to build consensus and recommend decisions and actions to the School Board that will further the District’s curriculum programs. One of the first topics that will be discussed by the committee is the District’s World Languages Program. Please check our website for meeting dates and times.

Study Island: Upper Elementary School grade level teachers are currently field-testing a web-based program called Study Island. This great resource helps our students who are having difficulty in reading and mathematics. In addition to having access to this program in school, students have the ability to access the program from home. At the end of this school year, we will be reviewing data obtained from the web-based program as well as getting input from teachers and students to determine which program modules we will purchase next year.
Title I Federal Programs: The New Hope-Solebury School District Title I Reading Program, known as “Reading Club,” provides additional instructional support in developmental reading for the kindergarten through fourth grade students in our learning community. The Title I Reading Club thirty minutes per day intervention is well coordinated with classroom lessons and schedules and has become a vital supplemental component to ensure success in reading acquisition for all of our students.

Through the Reading Club, we work hard to prepare students at the earliest age for the rigorous academic curriculum, which begins in earnest in third grade. The Title I Reading Program has earned accolades from students, teachers, parents, and our administrators and will continue to be an outstanding reading support for all students in our District who need this well respected intervention.

Curriculum renewal: Changes in guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Education will result in changes in state academic standards that drive curriculum in all contents/grade areas for grades K-12 and state assessments, re-mapping our district curriculum, and developing a new curriculum renewal cycle. Beginning with our professional development time next year, our teachers will begin to remap curriculum in the areas of Reading, Language Arts (RELA) and Mathematics. Additional areas will be identified in future years.

Strategic Plan: The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires all school districts in the state to develop a formal written Strategic Plan. A plan must be submitted to the state every six years with a midpoint progress report to be filed after the third year.

The Strategic Plan guides a School District by establishing a set of goals focused on future District needs and expectations and identifying and validating community, staff, and student needs, and interests. The Strategic Plan for New Hope-Solebury School District expires at the end of 2013. Early next fall, our school district will begin the process of building upon the existing Strategic Plan by developing a new plan.

Parallel to this timeline, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has changed the guidelines and process for developing a Strategic Plan. The new process is referred to as a Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive Planning facilitates communication and collaboration, promotes shared practices and resources, and ensures that every stakeholder is working toward common goals. As information about developing the Comprehensive Plan becomes available, information from the Curriculum Office will be disseminated to our school district community.
Food Service—Mr. John A. Dixon, Director of Food Services

Three members of the Food Service staff, Patricia Kinker at the LES and Maria Carvalho and Patricia Watson at the UES, have completed and passed the National Restaurant Association’s ServSafe Training and are now Certified Food Safety Managers. While the Bucks County Department of Health requires one individual per kitchen to be certified, at present 64% of the Food Service staff working in our kitchens daily hold this designation.

2012-2013 Budget Update—Gregory K. Hogg, Director of Business and Finance

The New Hope-Solebury Board of School Directors is currently working on the budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. In December 2011, the Board voted to approve a resolution stating that the tax rate will not be increased by more than the state approved index rate of 1.7%. This would increase the average tax bill by $80 per year.

The current expenditure budget as of March 27, 2012 is $34,616,556, which is an increase of 3.65% over the current 2011-2012 budget. The total revenue budget is $34,187,483, including $1,315,285 being used from the fund balance. The difference between expenditures and revenue is $429,073, which is the amount of the tax increase.

The major impacts on revenue include the low interest rates, assessment appeals that lower the tax base, lower transfer taxes due to a slowdown in real estate sales, and the uncertainty of state revenue.

The Leadership Team has worked hard to lower expenditures while maintaining educational programs. Among the items that have been reviewed are energy management, attrition when employees leave, joining a consortium for medical insurance, reviewing technological costs, and options for saving money on supplies and equipment.

The Board and Administration continue to work on the budget. It will be discussed at the Board’s Finance Committee on April 10, 2012. The Board will act on the proposed final budget at their meeting on May 7, 2012.

Athletics—Mr. Ted Harrington, Director of Athletics

✦ The Varsity Winter Cheer squad completed their season with a second place finish in the BAL Championships after a second place finish at the CB West Invitational.
✦ The Varsity Wrestling Squad finished third in the BAL Championships and brothers Kevin and Jeff Jarrett brought home individual Championships.
✦ Marshall Hendricks won a District One Championship and he will be joined in the Regional Championships by runner-up Kevin Jarrett and third place finisher Chris Warden.
✦ The Girls Basketball Team is the second seed in the upcoming District One Championships and looks for a big finish in the tournament.
✦ The basketball teams were well-represented in the BAL All-League teams with Elise Kalinovich making the first team, Grace Massimino making the second team along with her brother Matt for the boys and Theresa Deppenschmidt and Kate Suler making honorable mention.

Operations Department—Mr. David M. Hansel, Director of Operations

In an effort to continue to improve the quality of services that the Operations Department brings to our facility users, we are launching a Customer Satisfaction Survey geared toward those individuals or groups who are currently renting or utilizing the facilities here at New Hope-Solebury School District. The goal is to gather responses to a set of questions that will be emailed to the end-user asking for their feedback on a variety of topics which best describe their experiences and opinions in using the district’s facilities. Along with this feedback, they will also have the opportunity to provide additional comments. The survey should take only 5 to 10 minutes to complete. By collecting this data and analyzing the results, we will be able to maintain a high level of service to our community and end-users.