

PARSIPPANY-TROY HILLS TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



June 2023

JUNE DIVERSITY DATES

Caribbean American Heritage Month

LGBT Pride Month

June 5: World Environment Day

June 11: Race Unity Day is celebrated internationally to appreciate each other's diversity and come together to make the world a better place.

June 19: Juneteenth is a federal holiday in the U.S. commemorating the end of slavery in the country.

June 20: World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honor refugees around the globe.

June 21 – Summer Solstice

June 28: Eid al-Adha, also known as the Festival of Sacrifice, is one of the most important religious holidays for Muslims. During Eid al-Adha, Muslims gather for communal prayers at the mosque or in open prayer grounds.

June 26 to July 1: The Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca that all Muslims strive to make at least once during their lives. It is a highly spiritual event that includes a series of rituals. The conclusion of the Hajj is marked by the celebration of Eid al-Adha.

From Superintendent Barbara Sargent:

Thank you all for a wonderful six years in Parsippany-Troy Hills. I'm super proud of the new programs and successful practices we've developed. My friendships with staff, students, and parents have warmed my heart and made this work joyful.

As graduation approaches, I know our graduates are leaving the District as bright, capable individuals ready to embark on the next chapter of their lives. To the Class of 2023 and their families, congratulations and warmest wishes. You will always have friends here in Parsippany who support and care about you.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

- 1. Members of our learning community will design student-centered opportunities that require active student engagement and the authentic connection to real life experiences that strengthen creative problem-solving, critical thinking, leadership, community service, and social impact.**

How'd we do? This first year was all about developing a shared understanding of critical thinking and deeper learning, and expanding wellness throughout the district.

- ◆ School administrators and supervisors read [Creating Cultures of Thinking](#) and shared related professional articles and videos with teachers during faculty and grade level meetings.
- ◆ School principals implemented a Walkthrough Protocol to promote critical thinking practices.
- ◆ A Senior Internship program connects 100 high school seniors with relevant and authentic experiences in work settings, including Atlantic Health, CLR Solutions, Kalish Law Firm, Red Cross, and S&A Pediatrics.
- ◆ Administrators and supervisors attended mini-courses through Harvard University's *Project Zero* on "Making Thinking Visible" and "Let's Play".
- ◆ Teachers reinforce critical thinking in their lessons with students and create opportunities for students to generate their own understanding of concepts.

- 2. Members of our learning community will receive support for social and emotional awareness and mental and physical health in order to flourish, demonstrate empathy, and celebrate the diversity of all.**

- ◆ Student Advisory and lessons on social/emotional learning are a consistent part of the school week.
- ◆ Community service and civic awareness opportunities help students build stronger selves through volunteering.
- ◆ Student participation in Parent-Teacher Conferences teaches kids to advocate for themselves and develop public speaking skills.
- ◆ Various adult education sessions provided strategies to support children's good health and wellbeing.

NEW DISTRICT WEBSITE PLATFORM OPENS AUGUST 1

Throughout this school year, the district's Technical Department and administration have been working behind the scenes with *Apptegy*, a communications and marketing company, to build a new school and district website platform. The new website, schedule to go live on August 1, will streamline school and district communications, provide more up-to-date news feeds, and eliminate unnecessary or unused data. We're excited about the new look of the website and we know you'll find it really engaging and user-friendly. Be on the lookout for further information during the summer.

TAKE A HIKE!



Summertime means terrific hiking adventures in New Jersey! Whether you are a scout leader planning a hike with your den or troop, or just looking to get your family involved in some healthy outdoor activity, hiking in New Jersey is a super way to spend a few hours on a weekend. Here's a brief review from our school leaders about their favorite hikes:

From Mr. Todd Ricker, Assistant Principal at PHHS

- * Lewis Morris Park in Morristown has plenty of picnic areas and trails that link to Patriots Path within the park. There is also an outdoor workout area that contains challenging stations for children and adults. Mountain bike trails also run through a majority of the park.
- * Pyramid Mountain in Boonton has 2-3 different trails to choose from, and the hike to Tripod Rock is worth it. It's hard to believe that three small rocks can support the weight of a gigantic boulder.
- * Hedden County Park in Randolph has shorter distance trails that are great for small children. A stream runs through most of the park and there are easy access points for kids to splash around in the water.
- * Wildcat Ridge in Rockaway is usually very quiet and it's rare to see many people on the trail unless it's midday on the weekend. There is an abandoned cemetery that's over 100 years old and a bat cave along the trails.
- * Horseshoe Lake in Roxbury is a small lake with a paved trail around the lake. Patriots Path also runs through the park and contains miles of very flat, gravel paths. There are also picnic areas, multiple athletic fields and a playground. Mountain bikes are a great option to cover most of this park.

From Ms. Alison Caravano, Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts, and Mr. Brian Staples, Littleton Principal

- * My family loves Hacklebarney State Park. It has trails along the Black River that are beautiful and great for families with kids. There are picnic tables along the paths if you want to pause for lunch. Perfect for beginner hikers!

From Ms. Giana Otto, Assistant Principal at PHHS

- * The Tourne in Boonton/Denville is an easy hike with flat and hilly areas, lots of shade, and great for all ages. There is a small 9/11 memorial at the top of one of the trails, and on a clear day there are views of NYC from areas on the trail.

From Mr. Michael DiSanto, Director of Health/PE

- * Van Campen's Glen is a family favorite because of the waterfall swimming hole at the end of the hike. It's an easy flat trail that runs along a creek for about a mile, then drops off with a 20' waterfall.

From Ms. Sarah Townsend, Supervisor of Language Arts (6-12)

- * I recommend Jonathan's Woods, a hidden gem with a lot to offer. There's a great biking/trail running trail, trails through the woods up the mountain, and a nice, flat trail through the pine trees.

From Ms. Rachel Villanova, Supervisor of Science/Industrial Arts (6-12)

- * Castle Loop at Ramapo Mountain offers hikers the chance to climb rocks, explore a scenic lake and the stone ruins of Van Slyke Castle, and see multiple viewpoints on top of the mountain. This hike is just over 3 miles.

From Dr. Denis Mulroony, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

- * Wildcat Ridge on Green Pond Road in Rockaway has tons of winding trails of various difficulty, plus an old coal mine entrance, an abandoned graveyard, and a great view of NYC at Hawk's Watch.

If you're in need of resources on hiking with children, some favorites include [Best Hikes with Children in New Jersey](#) by Arline and Joel Katz. This book provides a summary of each trail, including level of difficulty, a map, and information about special things to look for. Also helpful are [Nature Walks in New Jersey](#) by Glenn Scherer and [50 Hikes in New Jersey](#) by Bruce Scofield, Stella Green, and H. Neil Zimmerman.

Bring plenty of snacks and water and enjoy the trail!