



# THE STANHOPE CHARGER

Your District Newsletter

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2020

## CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Steven Hagemann, Superintendent 973-347-0008 x4102 shagemann@stanhopeschools.org

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### All dates are tentative.

*Check school website for  
most current information.  
Some events may be virtual.*

\*\*\*

- August 18—  
Kindergarten Screening  
*by appointment*
- August 20—  
Kindergarten Screening  
*by appointment*
- August 24—Kinder-  
garten Orientation
- August 26—Board of  
Education meeting
- September 7—Labor  
Day, School Closed
- September 8—First  
Day of School
- September 10—Back to  
School Night
- September 11—  
12:15PM Early Dis-  
missal
- September 16—Board  
of Education meeting
- October 13—Columbus  
Day, School Closed

\*\*\*

It has been said time and time again over the last several months that, **“We are living in uncertain times.”** Although this may be true, I’d rather take some time to share with you some of the things that I am ‘certain’ about.

**I am certain** that when times get tough, the Stanhope community rallies to support each other and those in need. At the time when our community needed it most, I witnessed the highest level of camaraderie among colleagues, as our teachers and staff supported each other when asked to deliver instruction in a way they’ve never experienced before. At a minimum, aspiring teachers spend four years completing undergraduate coursework to learn how to differentiate instruction, manage their classrooms, assess student progress and promote collaboration. However in March, they were given just 24 hours to turn everything they knew upside down to deliver virtual and remote instruction to students ranging from three years old to 8th grade. Additionally, many of our staff members did so while caring for young children, sick, or elderly loved ones. **I am certain** of their dedication to each other and to their students.

I also saw community members and the Stanhope Town Council work hard to support those

in the community that were experiencing economic hardship as a result of the global pandemic. For months, food was donated and collected to be distributed to the people that needed it most. Dozens of families benefited from this group effort, and I would especially like to applaud the efforts of Mrs. Sharon Leon and Mrs. Karen Henry for coordinating the collection and distribution of non-perishable food. **I am certain** that there are some very special people living among us.

**I am also certain** that the parents of our students are some of the most patient and supportive human beings I’ve ever known. When the school was forced to close, the anticipated duration was about two weeks, however as the closure continued, our parents’ commitment to their children’s education grew stronger. Many developed a partnership with their child’s teachers and became such a significant contributor to their academic progress. Also balancing work and the typical everyday struggle of raising a family, our parents continued to support our teachers because it was in the best interest of all our students.

As we prepare to open our doors for live, on campus instruction in September, **I am certain** that school will not look like what we are accustomed to. We are accustomed to our

teachers facilitating small group discussions, planning interactive learning centers, and moving freely throughout the building to utilize our many resources. Many of these ‘best practices’ will not be possible while maintaining social distancing guidelines. However, **I am certain** that our students will feel the love and passion that our teachers have for them and for education. **I am certain** that our students will be able to see the dedication and excitement through our masks and feel how overjoyed we will be to welcome them back into our classrooms. After all, our students are the reason why most educators chose the profession and the reason we work tirelessly to help them achieve their full potential. **I am also certain** that every precaution will be taken to keep our students and staff safe throughout the school year, and that we will maintain consistent and transparent dialogue with the community.

We are here for you, and we are so looking forward to seeing you again!

**#WEAREVRS**

## PRINCIPAL'S PRINCIPLES:

Alicia L. Finklea-DiCataldo, Principal 973-347-0008 x4106 afinklea-dicataldo@stanhopeschools.org

As I reflect on this past school year, I would first like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your understanding, support, collaboration and cooperation. We made it!

In March, we embarked on a journey together that we never could have ever expected. The COVID-19 pandemic changed our world in an instant and we were faced with challenges that we had never encountered before. There was much uncertainty and fear of the unknown. But during this time our students, staff and their families came together accepting the challenge by supporting one another and lifting each other up in the face of adversity. I am very proud of and grateful for the response that our Stanhope community had. You handled the demands that you were faced with, while protecting everyone's best interest, displaying perseverance and defining grit. Education never fell to the wayside.

The camaraderie: emotional and inspiring. Even more so, you never wavered in holding to the true meaning of **#WeAreVRS**, by putting into action the values, respect and service that we hold near and dear.

**To our 8th grade students, YOU** did it! Never before has a challenge been presented to our eighth grade class such as this. You held your heads high, and admirably stayed the course. I know that many of the traditions have been missed. I wish that this could have been otherwise, but dig up those old photos and reminisce on the days that you have shared together, many of you since kindergarten...because those are the days to be remembered. How you laughed, loved and shared in each other's growth throughout these years. VRS will miss you as you head into your high school career and I wish you all the best. Do great things!

As we enter the summer months, our administration and staff are already hard at work preparing for summer programs and the start of a new school year, with many unanswered questions. Please be assured that as decisions are made and plans are set, we will share this information with you. We will do everything possible to create a safe environment for our students and staff when the time comes to return to campus, and if forced to continue school virtually, we will embrace what we've learned to prepare and deliver an even better remote learning experience.

Again, thank you to the Stanhope community for your dedication. May you all have a much deserved, restful break. Stay safe, well and enjoy the summer!

\*\*\*

## THANK YOU AND FAREWELL from Mrs. Carole Grube

I wanted to thank the entire Stanhope School Community for giving me the privilege of working with your children for over 34 years. I have been blessed to do what I love and to have a career that I found so rewarding. I have so many precious memories that I will treasure forever.

I never thought that I would be retiring under these circumstances. It is not the way I hoped, but I feel tremendous pride in my colleagues, administrators, parents, and students. My families truly got engaged and were on board from day one to transition from classroom learning to virtual learning. You have shown your children the importance of education and that sometimes in life you just have to "roll with it."

As I begin my next chapter, please know that you will be forever in my heart.

~ Mrs. Grube



## NOTES FROM THE NURSE

Jessica Frank, RN, BSN, School Nurse 973-347-0008 ext. 4110 [jfrank@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:jfrank@stanhopeschools.org)



During the closure, the Valley Road School staff participated in a home health challenge for the month of April. Each staff member was provided with a calendar of various daily health challenges. These challenges included things like: eat a salad for lunch, walk for 30 minutes, and meal prep for the week. For each challenge completed, the participants would email me and then receive their name in a raffle. At the end of the month-long challenge 4 winners were selected and received a prize. We had a great turnout, close to 400 raffle entries! The staff reports that they enjoyed this challenge because it kept them engaged in a competition that allowed

them to stay focused on building and/or maintaining healthy eating and activity habits while having to stay home during the quarantine.

\* \* \*

Finally, due to the current **COVID19** pandemic, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that the best hygiene practices you can follow to keep yourself and others safe during this time are: **practice social distancing, wear a face mask** when out in public or when you are around those that are immune-compromised, and **wash your hands!**

Always seek the advice from your own doctor regarding questions or issues you have regarding your own health or the health of others.

For more information on summer safety tips please visit: [https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Documents/Kids\\_Healthy\\_Safe\\_Summer.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Documents/Kids_Healthy_Safe_Summer.pdf)

For more information on the COVID19 pandemic please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

## KEEPING IT HEALTHY: Hot (Safe) Fun in the Summertime

Jessica Frank, RN, BSN, School Nurse 973-347-0008 ext. 4110 [jfrank@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:jfrank@stanhopeschools.org)

**It's summer**, and for kids that means it's time for sports, swimming, biking and picnics. And while active outdoor time is healthy and fun, experts say it's crucial for parents and kids to brush up on some seasonal safety tips. According to the experts at the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the summer poses its own set of risks. In order to help parents keep kids happy, healthy and safe all summer long, they are offering these safety tips:

- Heat exposure: Illness facts - Children can develop heat exhaustion and become seriously dehydrated when in the hot sun for too long. Symptoms include pale skin, dizziness, headache, fatigue, nausea, and vomiting. Kids under four years old are especially at risk in high temperatures. Safety check – Keep children indoors during heat waves. Make sure they have plenty of fluids even if kids say they are not thirsty. NEVER leave a child in a car, which can heat up quickly.
- Fireworks: Injury facts – fireworks can cause serious eye injuries that lead to partial or complete blindness. Sparklers can burn the skin and ignite clothing.
- Bicycles: Injury facts: Kids often crash into obstacles or lose control of

their bikes, but the most serious injuries occur when children are struck by cars. Safety check – Make sure your child wears a helmet every time they ride a bike. It should be snug and level with the forehead. Do not let children ride in the street before the age of 10, and teach riders to look both ways before crossing the driveway or streets.

- Skateboards and Scooters: Injury facts – head injuries and wrist fractures are a common occurrence. Kids are most likely to get hurt when they are first learning to ride, ride too fast, or attempt tricks. Safety check – Safety gear is a must! Helmets, wrist guards, non-slip shoes, elbow pads, and knee pads should be worn, and no child under 5 years should use skateboards or scooters.

- Lawn Mowers: Too many tragic accidents happen when a child falls off a riding lawn mower or is accidentally run over. Safety check – Keep all children far away from the mowing area. Always look around the mower before putting into motion, especially when backing up.

- Food Poisoning: Illness facts – Bacteria grow quickly in perishable food that is left out too long. Symptoms

resemble stomach flu: nausea, cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, and in severe cases, fever and bloody stool. Safety check – Make sure food is cooked thoroughly. Wash your hands often, and never leave food out for more than an hour when it's hot outside. Store food in a well insulated cooler with plenty of ice when outside at picnics and barbecues. - Swimming: Never leave children unattended while swimming! Always have an adult supervising the swimming area whether it be a lake, ocean, or pool.

Always seek the advice from your own doctor regarding questions or issues you have regarding your own health or the health of others.

For more information on summer safety tips please visit: [https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Documents/Kids\\_Healthy\\_Safe\\_Summer.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Documents/Kids_Healthy_Safe_Summer.pdf)

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at 973-347-0008 ext. 4110 or [jfrank@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:jfrank@stanhopeschools.org)



## THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS *LIVES!*

by Mrs. Fehir and Ms. Pipher

When we found out in March we would be sent home for two weeks, it didn't seem too much to handle. Two weeks of no battle practice? No problem. We shipped the students off with stacks of battle books and bid them farewell, hoping in the two weeks when we'd return, they be ready for a new pile of books to tackle. When two weeks turned into four, and four weeks turned into six, we knew it was time to face the music. After learning there would be no county-wide battle, we took matters into our own hands and began preparations for a school-wide final competition. These students, who had been reading the battle books consistently since the previous summer, deserved that, at the very least. Riling the troops, teams ranging from grades 5-8, we began to come togeth-

er by making our own classroom page, sending out weekly communications, "renting out" battle books, and practicing every week on Google Meets. And every week, the students showed up, ready to put their book knowledge to the test. We couldn't have been happier. Finally, the night of the live battle was upon us. For days we worked to practice livestream scenarios, while our brave battlers continued to read the hours away. The first battle, grades 5-6, was live with team Bookworms Reading Books up against High-Five and The Polar Bears at the Beach Drinking Lemonade. Not only did the students battle it out courageously, but we battled against YouTube, hoping to keep our live-stream playing, but to no avail. Although we lost the YouTube battle, we were happy to announce a winner, team BRB consisting of Sydney Herold

and Sara McNamara. Then a race to fix our live stream bugs while our seventh and eighth graders stepped up. Team Nonamers, The Midnight Milkshakes, and The Obese Cats Doing Backflips were faced with some tough challenge questions. It was tied until the ninth round when The Obese Cats scratched their way to the lead. At the end, Amira Abdallah, Avi Goyal, Maggie Hallowich, Ella Smith-Christie, and Lindsay Fehir of The Obese Cats were crowned the winners. We could not be prouder of the students that saw this club through until the very end, and hope they will return again next year, coupled with the upcoming fifth graders. And for our eighth-grade outgoing team, it has been a pleasure coaching you through four years of continued success. A job well done by all!

## GUIDANCE CORNER: The Positive Impacts of a Lockdown

Assunta Jardine, Guidance Counselor 973-347-0008 ext, 4108 [ajardine@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:ajardine@stanhopeschools.org)

The coronavirus has affected everyone around the world; people were getting sick, schools were closed, some people lost their jobs, and many were affected by panic and fear. But during difficult times many have found an upside as well. Yes, the lockdown had positive impacts too, that hopefully will last long after the lockdown is over. According to the RETHINK Stigma (2020) there are seven positive perspectives and actions:

**1. Family Time:** - Children being home from school is a great opportunity to bond as a family. Listen, play, and explore fun activities and support them during this difficult time. Not being able to visit friends and family can result in loneliness, but having the feeling "we are in this together" can trigger ways of feeling connected. Video chatting with friends and family is always a great way to stay in touch.

**2. Unplug:** Take this opportunity to unplug for a bit. You might be surprised at the relief you have as a result

of shutting out all the noises. Start meditating to slow yourself down. Begin meditating 10 minutes every day or during stressful times.

**3. Alone Time:** Being disconnected can seem scary but use this time to enjoy solitude. Being alone is a skill and like any other skills you can get better at it by practicing. Get to know yourself, spend time in reflection and be proactive about how you spend your time alone.

**4. Work/Life Balance:** If you are unable to work at this time, you may be stressed or even out of sorts with unfamiliar free time. Embrace the new-found free time as a much-needed mental break.

**5. Explore Hobbies:** Explore your hobbies or try new ones. I recommend creating a hobbies bucket list. There may be

activities you have been trying to get around to but never got the chance to learn.



**6. Self-Care:** Explore new ways to proactively support your mental health and well-being through acts of self-care. Find activities that help you feel calm, refreshed and confident.

**7. Rethink and Give Back:** This is a perfect opportunity to rethink how mental health is viewed and treated in our society. It's very important to check in with your friends and love one.

During through these stressful times if your child needs any assistance, please reach out to me, my email is [ajardine@stanhopeschools.org](mailto:ajardine@stanhopeschools.org)



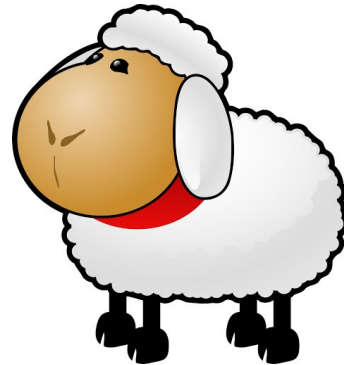
## IT'S ELEMENTARY: Second Grade Virtual Sheep Farm Trip

By Mrs. Jaust and Mrs. Henry

On Wednesday, May 6, 2020, the second grade classes joined together for a Google Meet to tour a sheep farm in Ohio! The classes learned about farming from Farmer Kristin. During the tour, we heard a question our class was curious about and Farmer Kristin answered! We asked, "How old are sheep when they are first sheered and how often do they get sheered?" Farmer Kristin informed

us that sheep are sheered once a year in April. Lambs have their first shear when they are a little over a year old. We also learned that sheep are mammals, they graze or eat grass, sheep have 4 stomachs, as well as other interesting facts.

If you would like to watch the tour, here is the link: <https://virtualfarmtrips.com/ohiosheeptour/>



## SURVEY SAYS!

By Cathy Yonki

In early June we sent out a survey to all staff asking them to tell us "What I did during Social Isolation." We thought it would be fun and maybe a little insightful to share the results. Here are some of the questions we asked and a sampling of responses:

**"What was/is your biggest challenge during this period of Social Distancing/Isolation?"** As you can probably guess, most said that not seeing family was their biggest challenge. In fact, 36% of the 25 people who completed the survey reported this. On the other hand, one teacher stated that spending too much time with family was a challenge. Balancing family time, work, and helping their children with school work was also a common theme. And Mrs. Grube really missed seeing her class.

While social distancing and working from home, **some of us learned things about ourselves**, such as Mrs. Petersen, who said, "I really enjoy being home all day with my husband. I will be married 48 years this June and I enjoy him every day we are together." And yours truly came to the conclusion that no matter where I work, from home or the office, my desk (dining room table) will always be a mess! Three staff members realized that they really like being around people. And one staff member reported as "OCD." This recent confinement also gave us opportunities to **learn more about those we live with**. For instance, four respondents discovered an appreciation for how resili-

ent and independent their children are, while one lucky parent realized that her son could clean and vacuum (tough break, kid). And apparently, there is "no limit on video games." On a more serious note, Mrs. Jaust reported her "husband is a dedicated essential worker. He never said "no" when the hospital needed him and worked many overtime night shifts when the virus was at its peak. He will forever be an unsung hero to us. He helped so many people sick with Covid-19." Nice work Mr. Jaust. Thank you.

Not surprisingly, folks explored their green thumbs, spent more time outdoors and 36% tried new recipes. Mrs. Snyder **learned how to** use a chainsaw, Mrs. Ettinger learned how to repair a fence, (the preceding items are not related!) and Mrs. Locke learned to make a bee hotel. Mrs. Jardine does not recommend moving to a new house during a pandemic, but other **people got to do some things that they would not normally have had the time to do**, like throwing birthday parties for the family dog or a one-year old kitten, cleaning out the attic, get rid of old clothes, and reorganizing the kitchen cabinets.

Also not surprising were the many **events cancelled** or postponed, including trips, vacations, weddings, hockey games, baseball games, Allison Inga's graduation from William Paterson and a trip to watch Derek Jeter be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame (Sorry Mrs. Truesdell). And sadly, the pandemic also prevented Dawn Perry's family from having a funeral for her mother-in-law.

**Binge-watching** was a popular activity among many, though one teacher reported never turning on the TV and another said "practically no TV on in our house." *Ozark*, *Anne with an E*, and *The Crown* were among some of the shows people were watching. Mrs. Fromme watched Chinese TV shows while others watched *QVC*, *DIY* and cooking shows. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported that the **best thing about being in lockdown** was spending more time with their families. Mrs. Connelly found that she has more appreciation for "the printed word," and Mrs. McNear has learned the joy of "not doing." One teacher claims she will never take seeing her students for granted! Another theme was an appreciation for the beauty of nature. And, thankfully, improved hygiene has been another good outcome of this pandemic. Finally, we asked **what things people thought would change as a result of COVID-19**. Mrs. Colananni hopes we become more kind and compassionate with others, and Mrs. Frank hopes that people will continue to support small local businesses as well as continue to buy produce from local farmers. And at least one teacher predicted that many will appreciate the job that school employees do on a day-to-day basis. They'll also appreciate the jobs of those we overlook, like grocery store employees and delivery people. I think we can all agree on that! Let's shake on it... On second thought, let's not! In any event, let's hope that we all emerge from this era healthy and optimistic for all the good that can come from this challenging time.



## HONOR ROLL: MARKING PERIOD 3 \*achieving honor roll status for three years



### High Honor Roll

#### *Sixth Grade*

Chase De Oliveira, Sydney Herold,  
Gavin Mahoney, Bella Ribeiro

#### *Seventh Grade*

Lucinda Clauson, Nathan Gonzalez,  
Lucas Granada, Samantha Krauklis,  
Sean Palermo

#### *Eighth Grade*

Amira Abdallah\*, Lindsay Fehir\*, Ava  
Madonna, Mia Vergano\*

### Honor Roll

#### *Sixth Grade*

Paul Andrews, Samantha Balogh,  
Grace Berwanger, Melia Gomez,  
Emily Kali, Sara McNamara, Scott  
Percarpio, Reese Roth, Angelina  
Tapia, Scarlett Zapata

#### *Seventh Grade*

Shea Ewer, Aliyah Heins, Devynn  
McCleary, Kelly Morales, Ashley  
Mueller, Iann Proano, Julio Sena-  
Clavijo, Michael Signorile, Sydney  
Stansfield, Santiago Valencia

#### *Eighth Grade*

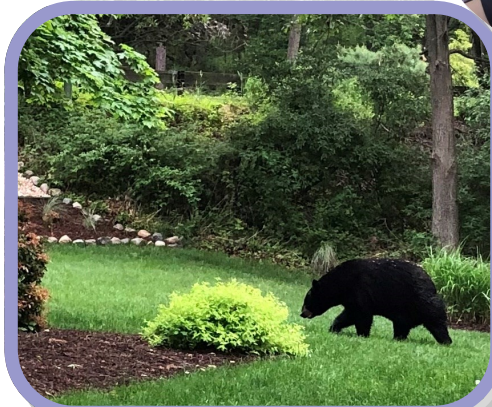
Leigha Arnott, Sydney Durand,  
Ysela Gomez, Avinash Goyal\*,  
Caitlin Leyson, Denesia Mathurian,  
Sila Sara Ozbay, Juliana Ramirez,  
Ella Smith-Christie,  
Ryan Stricchiola\*, Cooper Yowe

**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
**Well Done!**

**Keep up the good work.**

**#WEAREVRS**

## IMAGES OF WHAT WE DID DURING SOCIAL ISOLATION



Clockwise from upper left: Mrs. Frank, Mrs. Grube's class, Mrs. Jaust, Mrs. Jardine's family, A visitor to Mrs. Ettinger's house (**fix that fence!**)  
Center: Mrs.(and Mr.) Connelly

## WHO SAYS OLD DOGS CAN'T LEARN NEW TRICKS??

By Mrs. Mutz

At this point (I am writing this during week 11 of virtual learning at VRS)... we all know the words Google Meet, Zoom, and virtual classes. We have homework coming in using KAMI, shared documents, Google Classroom, email, and pictures taken with cell phones ...I've still had extra help with a number of students, but with the "new normal" the sessions have been on Google Meet and on the telephone (yes I gave my cell number to a few students and hope to not see my number posted online seeking prank callers to call it!).

As one of the older teachers at VRS ...let's just say when my husband sent flowers to school for our wedding anniversary, I didn't advertise how long we were married as most of the staff including the Superintendent and Principal, were not born yet when I got married. Alright, so I'm married 45 years. I was a child bride. Ok, not a child bride, but 19 years old. A math problem...(I am a math teacher after all...) As you quickly calculate my age... another birthday just passed... Yes, I just received my Medicare card. Ugh.

So, how is the "old dog" doing with the new tricks? With a few bloopers, we've had a few laughs, but effectively, nonetheless. In math class we don't often turn assignments in electronically, so it took a bit of practice (during Spring Break) to figure out how to show documents, videos, open documents that were submitted, etc....Great, I mastered Zoom. Oh, we're changing to Google Meet, more practice...ok got it....Then there are those moments....

I've spilled my tea all over my "desk" (a card table set up in my basement/classroom) while teaching a virtual class - I jumped up with tea spilling into my lap and yelled ...

"speak among yourselves, I need to get a towel!" Then came back and continued teaching math like nothing unusual happened (except we were all laughing).

I've had my dog jump on my lap or snoring so loudly next to me that I showed him to my students on video so they'd know what the noise was! And then there was the biggest blooper of all....like the day I accidentally closed my Google Meet Session in the middle of a problem during an Algebra class....leaving the students wondering if I was coming back! In my defense, I have a great new laptop at home with a touch screen. When I turned the computer to show my make shift whiteboard of Algebra problems, I touched the top of the screen and took myself out of the meeting...When I got back in, (about 2 minutes later), I was impressed that the students hadn't bolted back to bed while I was gone. I explained what had happened, we laughed, did a few problems, and then I did it again! Boom. Gone from the meeting. This time when I returned we all laughed again. After the class ended, I watched the video of the session to see if the expletive I said as I lost the session in the middle of class was on the recording - PHEW, nope, but what was there was great entertainment.... Here were 13 Algebra students staring at their screens in stunned silence. Finally someone whispered, "Do you think she's coming back?" then "Where'd she go" .... they looked unsure of what to do. Then a sweet girl in my class said "SHE'S SOOOOO OLD!" (the student shall go unnamed) .... there was a little more stunned silence and someone said "You do know this is being recorded, right?" followed by lots of moaning by the "offender". I laughed so hard when I was watching the recording!! I decided to send the class a very im-

portant email, here's how it went...

Subject: Very Important Lessons from today's Algebra class

Two very important things from today's lesson:

I'm not too old not to have a new laptop that turns to a tablet and has a touch screen.

Hmmm....guess I watched the video!

Oh, the other thing, I am old enough to know LOTS of ALGEBRA and share it with you!!!

Miss you guys anyway!! No offense taken....I had a good laugh.

--Mrs. Mutz----

I know virtual learning has been tough on the parents, students, staff, and all involved. I just hope that you all, like me, have taken some time to laugh! I wanted to also say thank you for sharing your kids with me. They're my kids too! (or is that great-grand kids?)

Signed, a card-carrying Medicare Member

(and, yes, I'm looking forward to seeing the students in the fall...assuming I can remember where I put my bifocals....)





## NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION

### By Gil Moscatello, Board President

After being asked to write an article for this Newsletter, the Board of Education (BOE) discussed what would be informative and would continue to cast a positive light on the Stanhope School District. We decided to review the last five years, the changes that have occurred and the sense of community that has developed during this time. To know where you are going, you need to know where you were, where you are now, and if you want to continue in the same direction.

The 2013-14 school year was a difficult year for the Stanhope School District. The community and the BOE were not satisfied with the administrative structure and/or performance. Students were voluntarily leaving the Stanhope School District. Parents were dissatisfied with the school culture, academic performance, and available student activities. Due to a variety of constraints, the BOE had changed the administrative structure several times using a variety of either interim superintendent, interim assistant principal, full-time superintendent/principal, and an interim business administrator.

A significant change had to be made and we knew it would cost slightly more money, but the benefits to the school and community would be substantial. During the budget development for the 2014-15 school year, under the leadership of Mrs. Gina Thomas, then Board President, the BOE pursued a change to a much more traditional administrative structure. As a Board, we decided to hire a full-time superintendent and have the superintendent hire a full time principal and we would keep the employment of the then current full-time interim business administrator.

In the spring of 2014, we advertised for a full-time superintendent. We were searching for a person with a passion for education, a strong and ethical leader, a person who wants to

be at Stanhope and knows he could move the school forward, has the expertise to bring a school community together and who has already been successful as a superintendent of schools. In late spring of 2014, we hired Mr. Timothy Nicinski, as Superintendent, with a start date of July 1, 2014. He wasted no time in setting out to hire a building principal who had the same passion for education, a similar work ethic and who could work alongside of him; developing plans and bringing the designs to life at the school level. He hired Mr. Steve Hagemann, as Principal of Valley Road School.

Mr. Nicinski and Mr. Hagemann went right to work making changes and improvements in the Stanhope School District. Their positive influence was a transformative force in the building affecting all members of our school community. They worked together until Mr. Nicinski retired in December of 2017. The Board of Education felt that Mr. Hagemann was ready to move into the role of Superintendent. The school District had been constantly moving in a positive direction and we did not want to lose the momentum. Mr. Hagemann was hired as Superintendent with an effective date of January 1, 2018. Mr. Hagemann had already interviewed and selected Mrs. Alicia Finklea-DiCataldo to replace him as Principal. Together they hired a new fourth grade teacher to fill the vacancy left by Mrs. Alicia Finklea-DiCataldo as she moved to Principal of Stanhope School, all three hires went into effect on the first day back from the winter break in January of 2018. Through the efforts of both administrators and our new business administrator, our administrative team has kept the momentum of change moving in a positive direction.

Following is a list of accomplishments/improvements that have been made since July of 2014. There are five areas we considered:

### Facilities

1. Converted Home economics room into a Life Skills Center.
2. New roof on old section of school. Completed with little or no disruption to school.
3. Repaved and restriped the parking lot. In addition, a fenced in dumpster area was added.
4. Added a new garage for storage of the school truck, outside equipment and for some school equipment storage.
5. Purchase of a new school truck and plow.
6. Total replacement of all the playground equipment.
7. Installed a security wall with a door that is only opened by a button in the general office. In addition, a bank type exterior teller drawer was added to pass through materials from the secure area into the main office without entering the building proper.
8. Installed a panic button that when activated automatically contacts the police, sounds the alarm, and makes an announcement.
9. Purchased and installed new lockers for middle school students in the classrooms.
10. Installed outdoor classroom in the courtyard, sponsored by the HSA.
11. Installed new fencing around the Pre-K and Kindergarten playground.
12. Installed a new kiln in the art classroom.

### Technology

1. Instituted a One to One Chromebook program for grade 4-8. (original program).
2. Replaced original Chromebooks with more powerful and updated Chromebooks. The original Chromebooks that were in good working order were placed into grades 1-3.

(continued on next page)



## NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

### *(Technology continued from page 6)*

3. Started a STEM Program
4. Started a Coding Club
5. Updated the resources used in the library to an internet accessed digital format.
6. Currently developing plans for an Innovation Room.

### **Curriculum**

1. Maintained the Director of Curriculum position as a shared services position.
2. Added a Speech position as shared service position with LVRHSD.
3. Developed special education programs that attracted tuition paying students to Valley Road School which has generated revenue for the district.
4. Purchased Linkit software program. This enables staff to identify individual student weaknesses at an earlier age. The student's weakness is addressed before it becomes a major problem and his/her improvements are tracked.
5. Major changes to the math program. Algebra 1 is now offered in eighth grade. Students who are successful may enter LVR into the Geometry program.
6. Stanhope's administrators work very closely with the administrators and supervisors from

LVRHS. Their objective is to align the skill sets that Stanhope students leave Valley Road School with the skills sets identified by LVRHS as the skills needed to succeed at LV.

7. Improvement in test scores from math, language arts and science that exceed the state average for respective content areas.
8. Significant improvement in the language arts program using test data and a number of students winning writing contests.
9. Significant improvement in the music enrollment and performance.
10. The music department has built an excellent working relationship with LVRHS. Valley Road students participate in LV Marching Band, in joint concerts and in some special programs, i.e. Veterans Day program at Valley Road School.
11. Development and implementation of a skill-based report card for grades 1 & 2.

### **Staff & Student Activities**

1. Seamless transition when Mr. Hagemann moved from principal to superintendent, when Mrs. Finklea-DiCataldo moved from teacher to principal and when a new teacher replaced Mrs. Finklea-DiCataldo. This all occurred on

the first day back in January and we never missed a beat!

2. Seamless transition from Mr. Gibbs to Dr. McHugh.
3. Reorganization of custodial staff and facility manager.
4. Established and maintained shared service agreements with Lenape Valley Regional School District.
5. Increased opportunities for students to participate in after school clubs and activities, such as the robotics, diversity club, Battle of the Books club, fitness/running club, Girls on the Run, and ski club.
6. Created stipend positions for assistant girls and boys basketball coaches.
7. Created a spring track program for middle school students.

### **Financial**

1. No comments or recommendations on our auditors' reports for the past four years.
2. No tax increase above 2% for the last ten years.
3. Negotiated two, three-year contracts and a one year contract with teachers' association.
4. Other than the roof project, all improvements were done without bonding.

## STANHOPE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

---

District Office  
24 Valley Road  
Stanhope, NJ 07874

Phone: 973-347-0008  
Fax: 973-347-8368



Steven T. Hagemann, Superintendent

Alicia L. Finklea-DiCataldo, Principal

Dr. Steven E. McHugh, Sr.,  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Creating Stanhope's Future...  
One Child At A Time!

---

Follow us on Twitter  
& Instagram:  
@StanhopeVRS

---

### BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

7:00 PM

Regularly the Third Wednesday of the  
Month (check school calendar for updates)

## CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!

---

Amira Abdallah  
Leigha Marie Arnott  
Brooke Alexandra Belfiore  
Axel Cardona Portillo  
Casey Matthew Cimafranca  
Sophie Costanza  
Sydney Madison Durand  
Lindsay Christine Fehir  
Ysela Isabel Gomez  
Avinash Kumar Goyal  
Mary Margaret Hallowich  
Anthony Kali  
Jadyn Kaci Kappes  
William Sean Kelly  
Andrew Richard Kmec, Jr.  
Caitlin Jewel Leyson



Mikayla Rae Lucas  
Ava Michelle Madonna  
Denesia Anna Mathurin  
Majd Basim Othman  
Sila Sara Ozbay  
Hannah Shea Palaszewski  
Michael Victor Poland  
Pablo Jr. Lopez Portillo  
Juliana Gisselle Ramirez Ozuna  
Sara Alaina Frantz Rappoport  
Aidan Louis Roth  
Ella Brooke Smith-Christie  
Ryan Michael Stricchiola  
James Andrew Tarczynski  
Harris Jeffrey Taylor  
Mia Katherine Vergano  
Cooper James Yowe

