



The High School English department has had a wonderful first marking period! After a four year initiative for independent reading and to align K-12 practice, all 9-12 English classrooms, both regular and special education resources, have classroom libraries. This work began in 2016 and was finally completed this fall.

Additionally, High School North is piloting a new basic skills program at grade 10 using the eIRLA and teacher collaboration to support students in becoming better readers and writers. Additional pilots to support hybrid learning through interactive, digital tools include: Actively Learn, at grade 9, High School South and Membean, grade 10, High School South as well as two classes of special education students at High School North. Grade 12 teachers at all high schools are piloting NEWSELA to help students develop those non-fiction reading skills that support college and career success.

October - November marked the district's participation in our third NEA Big Read for Ron Rash's novel, *Burning Bright*. A team of English teachers developed an engaging month-long unit plan that was offered in conjunction with Ocean County Library programming for the novel that helped students explore Appalachia through Rash's fictional text. On November 10th, Ron Rash visited Toms River through a virtual author talk for students in the afternoon with an additional talk for the community in the evening. In May of next year, we will be hosting our 4th NEA Big Read and the current Poet Laureate for the United States, Joy Harjo.