Reader’s Workshop

To kickoff the new school year, teachers serving grades K-5 received training to launch Reader’s Workshop in the classroom. Readers Workshop, also known as a gradual release model, is a research-based instructional approach in which the teacher guides students toward becoming independent readers.

Teachers of kindergarten through grade two are successfully implementing the new Wonders reading series, while teachers of grades three through five are using reading units created by Schoolwide to support their teaching of strategic reading strategies and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. Research has shown that student achievement in reading is directly related to the amount of time students actually spend reading; the reader’s workshop model of instruction fosters daily opportunities for students to read independently in the classroom.

Writer’s Workshop

During the first few weeks of school, teachers asked students to imagine themselves as authors as they launch into Writer’s Workshop. Classroom lessons focus on establishing positive writing routines and students are taught strategies to generate writing that stems from personal experience. The teachers are looking forward to learning more about these young authors through their stories.

Health & Physical Education

Health and physical education are an integral part of an adolescent’s development. Over the course of the year, your child will be participating in a variety of activities that will support the development of gross and fine motor skills. Students will learn proper techniques for a variety of sports, as well as the value of teamwork and perseverance. They will participate in both individual and team activities such as running, soccer and dance.

During the past few weeks, students have already begun setting fitness goals for themselves. As the year unfolds, they will track their own personal progress. We look forward to helping your child develop as a learner and an athlete.

Fine & Performing Arts

Students all over the Toms River School District are setting off on another great year of art and musical adventures. Our art students are getting their hands dirty with Paper Mache, paints, pastels, and clay while learning how to grow their art portfolios. The music students are enjoying exposure to new songs, while also learning how to read music, follow the symbols, and use dynamics and musical terms to assist with their performances.

Students in band, orchestra, and chorus have already begun rehearsing for their upcoming yearly concerts. The student concerts are sure to entertain. Please keep an eye out for invitations to a variety of events as the school year continues, and come on out with your families to enjoy the live entertainment!

Tips to Promote Family Literacy

Choose books that are at an appropriate reading level for your child: **Use the “Five Finger Rule”**: Open the book to any page and ask your child to read. Put up a finger every time your child comes to an unfamiliar word. If you have used more than five fingers before the end of the page, the book is too hard for your child.

To foster writing at home, parents can provide a place for their child to write. The area should be quiet and well lit. The “writing center” can be stocked with various supplies that encourage writing such as paper, pencils and crayons. Photos of family and friends or from magazines are also great resources to add to the center, as they can be used as story starters.

Social Studies

September is a busy month! Throughout the district, teachers recognized Constitution Day on September 17, 2014, by sharing the first sentence of the Constitution, called the **Preamble**, with students:

“**We the People** of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Teachers also communicated that the Preamble does not grant or restrict powers, but rather explains the purpose of the Constitution and sets the stage for the first 7 articles and the first 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, which follow.

The first three words of the Preamble, "We the People," may be the three most important words in the history of American democracy.

Science

It is an exciting time for Science education as administrators and teachers will begin collaborating to align the Science curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The new standards reflect major advances in science and engineering concepts using a research based understanding of how students learn science.

The alignment will be the beginning of a project that will be ongoing for the next several years. The NGSS will provide guidance to teachers to expand their knowledge of instructional strategies as they prepare our students for 21st century learning and career readiness. Teachers will continue to integrate informational text on various topics relative to science, as well as project based learning, in the teaching of English Language Arts.